

The
VISION
& JOY



ALEXANDER CORKEY

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"IT IS A DREAM THAT WILL LAST FOR LIFE."

THE VISION OF JOY

or

When "Billy" Sunday Came to Town

A sequel to "The Victory of Allan Rutledge"

By

ALEXANDER CORKEY

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Illustrated by

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cities, when the church is alive and militant, is portrayed in scenes drawn from actual life.

The reader will see that I have shut my eyes to none of the appalling evils of our day in political or ecclesiastical life. I expose these with a cruelty which only fidelity to the truth can justify, but I make no apology for the optimism which breathes through "The Vision of Joy." The times are vibrant with life and love and joy if only men have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand.

THE AUTHOR.

The Vision of Joy

CHAPTER I.

THE IMMIGRANT

The magnificent ocean liner, S.S. Neptune, raised its anchor slowly in Queenstown harbor. The decks were crowded with eager passengers, all anxious to get started on the voyage across the Atlantic. The rails of the ship were lined with double rows of faces that peered intensely at the tug boat which had brought a load of passengers from the Queenstown dock, and which was now steaming back to port. The Neptune had sailed from Liverpool, but it called at the Irish harbor for the European passengers who preferred to embark at that point as well as the travellers from Ireland. After leaving this port the ships sail across the broad Atlantic without a further stop, and the start from Queenstown is always exciting, especially to those leaving Europe for the first time, as it is their last sight of the Old World.

High up on the wide upper deck the Neptune's first-class passengers had the point of vantage, and from their elevated place could obtain a good view of the capacious harbor and the green fields of Ireland. The

steerage passengers were crowded on the forward part of the lower decks, a motley assembly, from almost every part of Europe, mingling together on shipboard, but each country clearly distinguished by dress, manners and language.

The anchor was raised and the liner steamed majestically out to sea, its four funnels pouring out clouds of smoke, and leaving in its wake a whirling path of foaming waters, which the giant screws of the propellers had churned to madness.

In a few hours the last vestige of shore line had disappeared, and the great ship was swiftly plowing the billowy ocean.

"I am glad to see so many immigrants from Northern Europe on board this ship. They are Europe's life-blood and we are draining the Old World dry."

Two young men were standing on the upper deck of the westward-bound Atlantic liner, S.S. Neptune, on its first day out from Queenstown. They were gazing down on the crowded steerage as one of them expressed himself in those words. The speaker was evidently a young American, returning from a European trip. His companion was a fellow-voyager in the first cabin, who had stopped for a moment at his side as he paced the deck of the vessel.

"I am an immigrant myself, sir," was the quiet response. "I was just thinking now of what may possibly await all of us immigrants on the shores of your land of promise."

The American turned to face the stranger, whom he had addressed freely in the belief that he was a

companion American, for few immigrants travel by cabin passage when making their first trip across the Atlantic. At the same time the immigrant also faced around and the two men looked each other squarely in the eyes.

It was not an unpromising young manhood that met the gaze of Albert Townley, which was the American's name. A little taller than the medium height, square-shouldered, clear-eyed, with a thoughtful brow and a firm mouth, this young traveller had an air of authority and mastery which Albert Townley's quick eye at once recognized. It was plain that if he was an immigrant he was not an ordinary immigrant.

"I can tell you what awaits you in America, sir," he said, after a brief pause. "You will find life there and all that life means."

"What does life mean in your country?" enquired the immigrant, as they began to stroll together down the long upper deck.

"Life with us, sir," answered the American with enthusiasm, "means action, energy, struggle and victory."

"Does it never mean defeat?" asked the other thoughtfully, speaking with a note of pathos in his voice.

The enthusiastic son of the New World answered quickly and emphatically. "Never. Defeat is death, not life, with us."

"It is life I want," responded the other, gazing out over the sea which surrounded the fast-moving liner with its mystery on every side.

"I am crossing the ocean to find life. I am not after bread as the others," and he waved his hand toward the steerage.

Just as the immigrant said this a fierce yell arose from the steerage deck below and Albert Townley exclaimed, "There's something going on down there. Let us go down."

Hurrying to a stairway which led to the steerage quarters, the two cabin passengers descended and found the steerage deck a scene of strife and confusion. A number of Irish immigrants had seized and were holding against the vigorous attacks of a crowd of Germans a desirable part of the steerage deck. Greatly outnumbered, the Irishmen were struggling like demons and yelling like Mohawk Indians, while their opponents were doggedly seeking to regain the coveted position for, as one of the by-standers explained to Townley, the Germans had been first in possession, but the Irish, anxious for a little excitement, had suddenly charged them with a rush. Before the astonished Teutons knew exactly what was happening, they had been driven off by furious Irish like chaff before the wind, but they soon rallied their forces and returned to the attack. The contest was a good-natured *mêlée* at first, both sides laughing hilariously, but as it continued Townley and his companion could see that the combatants were getting more earnest as the persistent Germans were determined to win back their place of vantage and they were pressing hard the little company of Erin's men.

Just then an officer of the ship, attracted by the

noise, appeared on the deck. Rushing into the midst of the struggling mass of humanity, he began to deal blows right and left, shouting at the top of his voice.

"Stop it, you dogs, stop it, stop it."

His efforts to restore peace between the warring factions ended disastrously for him.

"Take that, ye impudent spalpeen. I'm no dog," said an athletic young Irishman, as he dealt the ship's officer a stunning blow on the ear, which sent him staggering to the rail of the liner.

Furiously enraged by the blow, the officer shouted to three sailors who were standing nearby holding a hose. "Turn the water on them." The sailors with evident glee turned the big nozzle of the deck hose on the crowd and began drenching them with salt water.

The unfortunate combatants who up to this time had been acting in a spirit of hilarity were taken aback by this unexpected assault of brine.

"Shut it off, shut it off," they cried in chorus. "It's all in fun."

But the sailors, urged on by the irate officer, continued to soak the drenched men and even sent the water pouring over the women and children on the outskirts.

"What a shame to wet the poor devils like that!" said Townley, indignantly. The words awoke his companion to instant action. With one bound the first-cabin immigrant was beside the sailors and before they could guess his purpose, he had snatched the hose from their hands and turned it full on their own faces, sending the three sailors sprawling on the deck. Then,

throwing the spurting hose over the deck rail, where it splashed harmlessly into the ocean, he rejoined Townley. In an instant two or three Irishmen rushed forward and gashed the hose with their pocket knives, rendering it useless. The discomfited sailors struggled to their feet and turned off the water.

"Who are you, sir? What do you mean?" roared the officer, advancing towards the cabin immigrant.

Without answering the two young men ascended the stairs, Townley leading the way, while the officer stared in helpless rage. He was about to follow them to the cabin deck, but the jeers of the now infuriated crowd caused him to retreat hastily to a hatchway down which he disappeared, followed by the dripping sailors. The steerage passengers were left in undisputed possession of their drenched deck, but as they shivered in their brine-soaked clothes they hurled curses at the insolent officer who had turned their merriment into dismay.

"A sight like that maddens me," exclaimed the immigrant, when they had reached the spacious first-cabin deck. "That is what has made me disgusted with England and is driving me across the sea."

The young man spoke with intense emotion.

"What do you mean?" asked Townley.

"That vulgar insolence of authority which that officer showed toward those poor steerage wretches. I have seen so much of it that I can't stand it any longer."

"But the men were to blame in part," interposed the American.

"Yes, I admit it, but there was no excuse for the

officer's insolence toward them just because they are travelling by steerage. If they had been cabin passengers he would not have dared to call them 'dogs.' "

"If it had been a crowd of American working men he would not have been so insolent," agreed Townley. "They would have mobbed him."

"It is the lawless insolence of such vulgar upperlings that provokes the lawlessness of the mob which we hear so much condemned nowadays," the immigrant continued, his cheeks flushing and his eyes shining. "I am hoping to find society in your New World more tolerable than in England in the case of a man who believes in liberty, equality and fraternity."

Albert Townley looked with interest at his companion as he answered, speaking slowly. "I am afraid, sir, you will not find society perfect even in America. If social injustice grieves you our institutions will not commend themselves entirely to you. In America our theories about these things are much better than our practices."

"Do not your theories of equal rights to all and special favors to none find realization in your new and prosperous land of freedom?" asked the immigrant, earnestly.

"Partly only, as I see things, although many Americans are altogether satisfied with things as they now are. However, we are beginning to make such ideas more practical in our country," continued Townley with more enthusiasm. "Social justice is becoming the watchword of the younger generation of Americans and I welcome you, sir, as a soldier of the com-

mon good, for I judge that you will be of help in the great cause of social betterment in the New World. Pardon me, did you tell me your name? My name is Townley, Albert Townley, of Bronson, Michigan." As he said these words the American reached out his hand cordially. The immigrant grasped the outstretched hand and, shaking it warmly, replied, "I am Reginald Nelson, an immigrant from England. Did you say your home is in Bronson, Michigan?"

"Yes, I am just returning from a three months' vacation in Europe and I tell you I will be glad to see old Michigan again. I enjoyed my travels in Europe, but it is clearer to me than ever that America is the land of destiny."

"Bronson," said his companion, whom we shall now call Reginald Nelson. "I have heard of Bronson before. Ah, yes, now I remember. I have a letter of introduction to a law firm in your town."

Taking out a large, expensive-looking pocket-book, Reginald Nelson took out some papers.

"I have here," he said, letters of introduction to prominent law firms in New York, Chicago and some other cities, and I am sure I have one addressed to a firm in Bronson. I never expected to use it. Yes, here it is. Do you know that law firm in your city?"

He handed Townley a brief letter of introduction from a London law firm addressed to "Messrs. Millman and Graham, Attorneys-at-law, Bronson, Michigan."

"I certainly do," responded Townley, when he had read the inscription. "That is our largest law firm.

Are you going into the profession of law in America?"

"No, I hardly think so," answered Reginald Nelson, slowly. "I have these letters of introduction to assist me in getting started in America, for I must settle down somewhere and go to work for a living. I am not crossing the ocean on a pleasure trip."

"I thought you said you did not need to go to America for bread," said Townley, speaking before he realized how the words sounded.

The immigrant blushed slightly, but answered promptly, "I did not need to leave England to make a living. For me life would be easy there, too easy to suit my taste. I have cut loose from associations that galled me. I mean to carve out my own destiny in the new world. I have no 'family' to fall back on now."

"Bravo," exclaimed the American, heartily, looking at Reginald Nelson in admiration. The young immigrant's face had a look of energy and determination as he spoke. His blue eyes sparkled. He stood erect, his head slightly thrown back, a picture of earnest, positive manhood.

"Make Bronson your home and you will never regret having given up a life of inglorious ease. Bronson is a city of opportunity and it is growing by leaps and bounds. Its population is now fifty thousand. You will find life in Bronson."

"I had been thinking of choosing one of your larger cities like New York or Chicago," responded the immigrant.

"I have spent some years in both New York and

Chicago," said Townley, with the characteristic impulsiveness and assuredness of an American, "and I prefer Bronson. You see real America face to face in the smaller cities. Our very large cities are, for the most part, imitations of the cities of the Old World. They are poorly governed and throng with foreigners who have never assimilated American ideas. Visit Bronson and see for yourself."

Reginald Nelson pondered for a little while before answering and then he said smilingly, "If I should make Bronson my starting place I shall have at least one friend to begin with."

"Count on me," responded Townley, also smiling, "but I shall miss my guess if you do not soon gain in Bronson all the friends you need."

"Let it be Bronson then," said Reginald. "I will accompany you from New York."

While the two friends were conversing further in regard to Reginald's plans, a sailor interrupted the conversation and summoned both of them to the captain's office. The destruction of the hose had been reported by the outraged dignitary and the two men were called upon to explain. Reginald described the circumstances to the captain with much animation, emphasizing the intolerable insolence of the officer. The captain insisted that the officer was acting in accordance with the rules of discipline, and began to threaten the immigrant for resisting and interfering with lawful authority.

"That explains who I am, sir," said Reginald Nelson, finally, taking a document from his pocket and handing it to the captain.

The captain read the document with a look of astonishment and returned it with a respectful bow, saying in a quiet tone of voice, "Very well, Mr. Nelson, I will accept your explanation and we will call the incident closed."

As they walked away the immigrant exclaimed scornfully, "There it is again. The justice of my argument made no impression, but I was treated respectfully because of my place in society. Bah! freedom and equality are only words, only words."

He paused a moment and then continued: "I shall henceforth get respect and justice as an immigrant if I get it at all. There goes privilege as far as I am concerned."

Saying this, he took the document which he had shown to the captain and which had suddenly changed the whole tenor of the captain's conduct towards him, and crushed the paper in his hands. Going deliberately to the ship's rail, he tossed it far out on the billowy waves.

The action aroused intense curiosity in the mind of Albert Townley and he was about to question Reginald in regard to himself when they were both astonished to hear a girlish voice exclaim, "Why, here's our Mr. Townley."

A beautiful young girl stood before them, holding out her hand to Mr. Townley and asking, "Where did you come from?"

The girl's mother was behind her daughter and Townley greeted both with enthusiasm.

"This is pleasant, I assure you. I thought you were to remain another winter in Paris."

"Joy became so homesick that we had to start for Bronson and her father kept writing for us to return, so here we are," said the woman.

"I am so glad to be on my way back to Bronson," added the daughter.

"Always loyal," responded Mr. Townley, smiling, and then, remembering his companion who had moved to one side, he introduced the mother and daughter to Reginald as "Mrs. Graham and her daughter, Miss Joy."

Mrs. Graham was a middle-aged, fine-looking woman, with a strong face which might have seemed severe, but for the mild glance in her eyes. The daughter was a lovely girl, barely twenty years old, with raven tresses, dark, shining eyes, and attractive figure. As she shook hands with Reginald Nelson a faint flush mounted her fair cheek and the young immigrant's deep, earnest blue eyes lit up with admiration.

Albert Townley began to explain how Reginald was crossing the sea to make America his future home and that he expected to begin in Bronson.

"He has just been showing me an introduction which he has to Mr. Graham's law firm," he said to Mrs. Graham, with interest.

"You will like Bronson, I am sure," said Joy Graham, turning to Reginald. "We have been away for nearly a year and I am just dying to be home in Michigan again."

"Do you not think that Paris is a beautiful city?" asked Reginald a little later. Mrs. Graham and Albert Townley had walked on and the immigrant and the girl were following.

"Yes," she replied, "the streets, and parks and buildings are delightful, but the artificial life of Paris was depressing to me. I am longing for the free, life-giving atmosphere of my native land."

"Mr. Townley has interested me already in your native city of Bronson," said Reginald. "He is a special friend of your family, I judge."

"He is one of the ministers in Bronson."

"A minister?" said Reginald, in amazement. "Do you mean that Mr. Townley is a clergyman?"

"Yes," laughed the girl. "Does that seem strange to you?"

"I should never have judged he was a clergyman," said the immigrant. "His dress does not indicate it."

"Oh, our Protestant ministers, or clergymen, as you call them, do not dress differently from other people in Bronson. Customs are very different there from those in England."

"Do you attend his church?" asked Reginald.

"No," answered the girl. "He is pastor of the People's Church. We are members of the Central Church of Bronson. In his last letter papa wrote us that a new minister has just been called to our church; a well-known man from the Middle West, called Allan Rutledge. Mama and I are anxious to meet him as we have often heard about him.

"Tell me what kind of a place Bronson is," said

the immigrant, changing the conversation, and Joy Graham began a description of the Michigan city.

When the dinner gong sounded a little later and Townley and Reginald were walking down to the dining room together, the immigrant remarked, "I am beginning to feel that I know a good deal about Bronson already."

"I think you are beginning to make a good impression on the people of Bronson already," responded Townley, with a smile. "Mrs. Graham was much interested in you and Miss Joy seemed to be delighted with your company. Mrs. Graham was asking me about your home in England, but I could not give her much information."

"I am an immigrant, that is all," said Reginald, with a note of pathos in his voice. "By the way," he continued, "Miss Graham told me you were a clergyman. I am much surprised to hear it."

"But not offended, I hope. Do you have any prejudice against the teachers of religion?"

"Religion is all right," answered the immigrant evasively.

A day later, on Sunday morning, Albert Townley noticed that his friend did not attend divine service, which is always held on Atlantic liners in the dining room of the first cabin every Sunday morning.

"In spite of his attitude towards religion," said Townley to himself one day as the voyage drew near its close, "I like this immigrant. I wonder who he is."

Albert Townley often wondered about the antecedents of Reginald Nelson, but with the exception of

the few hints that the immigrant gave when he spoke of a possible life of ease in England, the young man did not mention his past life and made it clear that he desired his past history to remain a blank. The few attempts which Townley made to satisfy his curiosity were unsuccessful and seeing that the efforts displeased his new-found friend, Townley decided to accept Reginald's terms of friendship and avoided all reference to by-gone days.

"He has come into my life," pondered Townley, "like Melchizedek of ancient history, 'without father, without mother, without genealogy,' but I am mistaken in my estimate of him if he does not make good in Bronson."

The friendship between Mrs. Graham and the immigrant also grew during the ocean voyage, and Joy Graham found him a most agreeable companion. She discovered that he was a violinist and persuaded him to add his part to a concert which was given by the more talented passengers on the cabin list. The immigrant charmed all with his weird, passionate power as he seemed to play out his very soul in his renditions. As Joy Graham listened she intuitively divined that some strange mystery was buried deep in the heart of Reginald Nelson. On the morning of the day that they expected to reach New York, the immigrant arose early and paced the deck alone. He had slept little during the night and sought refreshment in the early exercise. The thought of the New World and his life there thrilled his soul.

"Life, life," he kept saying to himself as he gazed

on the wide expanse of ocean; "life, I am beginning to find it already. As Jason found his Golden Fleece in Colchis, so I am assured I shall find my treasure in America. Jason had a Medea, I remember, to help him. I wonder if some Medea will help me."

He fell into a reverie and pleasing dreams came to his mind of a dark-eyed, black-haired maiden.

The approach of a pilot boat aroused him. The pilot climbed on board, and took charge of the wheel, to guide the great liner safely to its dock in New York Harbor.

"In a few hours I shall see the New World," pondered Reginald. "It will be a new life to me. Have I acted wisely? At any rate the old life was intolerable. The very name of America thrills my soul with hope."

Land appeared, rising ahead out of the morning mist. In a little while they could see the smoke of New York clouding the western sky.

"Welcome, liberty and life," said the immigrant as he crossed the gangway and set foot on American soil.

Contenting himself with a brief visit around New York, Reginald accompanied Albert Townley to Bronson, Michigan.

CHAPTER II.

ALLAN RUTLEDGE IN BRONSON.

The day after his arrival in Bronson, Albert Townley was walking down the main street, nodding his head continually, like a Chinese mandarin, as his numerous friends greeted him on every side. Suddenly two men stopped in front of him.

"I am glad to see you home again, Mr. Townley," said the older of the two men.

"Mr. Graham, I declare," responded the minister heartily. "It does me good to see some familiar faces once more."

"Mrs. Graham and Joy have been telling me about their pleasant voyage home on the same boat with you," said the other, who was Mrs. Graham's husband. "Here is a friend," he continued, "whom I wish you to meet. This is the new pastor of the Central Church, Dr. Allan Rutledge. I think you two men ought to become good friends."

Albert Townley looked at Mr. Graham's companion with a lively interest. He had often heard of the young minister who had stirred the entire Middle West with his apostolic fervor and his practical Christianity.

"This is indeed a pleasure," said Townley, with sincere cordiality, as he grasped the out-stretched hand of Allan Rutledge. "I welcome you to Bronson."

The two ministers greeted each other with genuine pleasure as they were known to each other by reputation, and Allan Rutledge had been assured that he would find in Albert Townley a noble minister of the Gospel. Mr. Townley looked with admiration at the strong face and manly form of the Western minister.

After the three men had conversed together for a few moments, Mr. Graham said, "I have been showing Dr. Rutledge around the city this afternoon, and I was about to take him to the Y. M. C. A. building, but I believe, Mr. Townley, that you will be a better guide than I would be."

"I shall be pleased to accompany him there," replied Mr. Townley, quickly. "By the way," he added, as Mr. Graham was turning to go, "there is a young immigrant from England who crossed in the *Neptune* with your family and myself. He has a letter of introduction to your law firm.

"Mrs. Graham spoke to me about him this morning," said the other. "She said he had come to Bronson at your invitation. He has not yet called on me, but when he does I shall be glad to meet him and do what I can for him."

The two ministers walked down the street together towards the Y. M. C. A. building, a new and commodious edifice.

After looking over the building they sat down together in the handsomely furnished parlors.

"Tell me something about your work in Welling-

ton," said Mr. Townley, after they had discussed the splendid work which the Y. M. C. A. is accomplishing in the cities of America.

"There was nothing very wonderful about my ministry in Wellington," replied Allan Rutledge, smilingly. "I am surprised to see the interest that the country has taken in my work in that small Iowa town. The facts simply were that the community needed the Gospel of Christ, and I was privileged to bring it to them in an effective way."

"But in the reports of your work there which I have read," said Townley, "you revolutionized your church, the college in Wellington and the entire community."

"When I began my ministry in Wellington," responded the other, speaking more earnestly, "both our church and college were dead spiritually. There was a distressing lack of life and power and I simply proved once more what has been proved ten thousand times that the Gospel is the power of God."

Before accepting his recent call to Bronson, Allan Rutledge had been pastor for six years in Wellington, Iowa, and, as Mr. Townley said, his ministry there had brought him wide fame. It was his first pastorate and the results of his ministry had been an inspiration to many discouraged preachers. The church had more than doubled its membership, Wellington college had taken on a new lease of life, and the general tone of the whole community had been improved in a surprising manner. As a direct result of his success the whole Church in Iowa had had a new birth of spiritual power.

The Central Church of Bronson had finally been able to prevail on the powerful young Western minister to accept a call and he had only arrived in Bronson on the week preceding the return of Albert Townley from his trip abroad.

"I tell you, Mr. Townley," said Allan, earnestly, "it was a sad day for me when I left Wellington. Only that I felt in my soul that the call to Bronson was the call of God, I should never have left the congenial surroundings in Iowa."

"You have come here," responded Albert Townley, speaking with intense earnestness, "in response to the prayers of many true Christian people. We feel we are in bondage in Bronson and we need a Moses to deliver us. You will find work here worthy of your highest powers."

"I thank you for this word," replied the other, seriously.

"I have been here for two years," continued Mr. Townley, "and I have been eager to regenerate the community, or at least my own church, but I feel that I have miserably failed. I had really begun to despair. The burden of the spiritual death became so heavy last spring that it almost broke me down. That is how I came to spend the Summer in Europe. I felt that I must get away somewhere or I would lose my own faith."

Allan Rutledge looked with sympathy at his fellow-minister and added, quietly: "I can sympathize with you."

Then he added, smilingly, "But you certainly found

health in Europe for you look the picture of physical well-being."

"I found more than health of body during my visit to the Old World," answered Townley. "I received new inspiration for my life-work. You know I travelled as far as the Holy Land, and my observations there cleared my mind of some paralyzing doubts."

"Doubts are always paralyzing. They are the curse of our age, its disease rather," said Allan Rutledge, emphatically.

Albert Townley then related how his Christian faith had been strengthened in Palestine, and the new pastor of the Central Church listened attentively.

"Tell me now," said Allan, a little later, "in what way Bronson needs regeneration. I only arrived here last week and as I have never been in Bronson before you can understand I am still rather a stranger. I must confess I have been delighted with the looks of things. The people seem so cordial, and Bronson looks in every way like a prosperous city, with its growing manufactures, its beautiful homes and streets. I have also been impressed with the appearance of the church buildings in the city, and this new Y. M. C. A. is assuredly a tribute to the higher life of the people of Bronson."

"Did not Wellington, according to its size, look just as beautiful on the outside as Bronson does," asked Mr. Townley, "and yet have you not just told me that you found it dead spiritually? It is so with Bronson, only our problems are more complex and difficult than was possible in Wellington. Like so many of our American cities Bronson looks best on the outside, for

it is a feature of our modern American life to clean 'the outside of the cup and platter,' but, alas, the inside is often horrible enough."

Allan Rutledge looked grave and asked his companion in earnest tones:

"Tell me exactly what you mean. I want to know the worst about Bronson. Evidently so far the half has not been told me for I have only heard about Bronson at its best."

"Do not for a moment think that I am trying to make out that Bronson is a specially wicked city," said Townley, quickly, "but I would like you to begin your ministry here knowing that Bronson needs a regeneration far more than Wellington ever needed one. There are a multitude of earnest Christian men and women in our city, but the city itself is now in the control of the powers of evil. It is foolish to deny it. A corrupt ring controls our city politics and they keep our best citizens under their thumb. Saloons and gambling places are wide open and no one pretends that our laws regulating and restraining these evils are enforced. There are vile dens in certain parts of our city which are undisturbed. In one word, the cancer of evil is eating the life out of our body politic and our churches and Christianity itself seem helpless."

Allan Rutledge listened with intense seriousness to the words of Albert Townley. When the minister had ceased there was a silence in the room for a few minutes. Finally, Allan asked, "What are the churches doing to heal the cancer?"

"Practically nothing," replied the other. "That is the sad part of it. Our churches have come to believe that the cancer is incurable, that such things must be tolerated. There is a little Rescue Mission manned by a few faithful veterans, which makes some feeble protest against conditions in our city, and this Y. M. C. A. is also doing what it can to save our young men, but the cause of righteousness is losing ground in Bronson."

Allan Rutledge made no response and his head sunk wearily on his hand.

"Do not think I am trying to discourage you," said Mr. Townley, anxiously, noticing the dejection of his friend. "I look on you as a spiritual specialist sent to Bronson in the Providence of God, and I am setting before you the disease which I trust you can heal."

"You are doing what is right, my brother," said Allan Rutledge, looking up at Townley's earnest face. "I understand. I think I am beginning to get a true vision of what my work ought to be in Bronson. It certainly will not be one of ease and quiet, I can see. Go on with your diagnosis."

"I am speaking in strict confidence, remember," said Townley, "just as a local physician would speak to a visiting specialist, but I want to give you an illustration of the condition of things as they really are. You noticed that Mr. Graham greeted me very cordially this afternoon when he introduced us. He and I are good friends and in many ways I respect him as a good citizen. But he is no Christian and does not pretend to be. His wife and daughter are members of your

church, but he is not a member, although as you know he is the leading trustee in the organization and really controls the Central Church. He is well versed in regard to the inward corruption of Bronson, but he regards it as inevitable and will fight any attempt to better conditions. He is the legal counsel of the corrupt ring and he uses his splendid legal powers to keep that crowd out of the penitentiary."

At this rather unflattering picture of his leading trustee, Allan Rutledge looked somewhat blankly at the merciless diagnostician. His companion noticed the expression and continued, "I want you to pardon me for speaking so plainly, but, remember, it is the business of a physician to know the disease he is called upon to cure. Your church is merely a sample of what every influential church is in Bronson. In my own church the editor of our best daily paper, the *Courier*, is one of the leading members. His name is Thomas Marchmount. He is my chief trustee, but as a Christian he is a doubting Thomas, and looks on the church exactly as Mr. Graham does. He would not be a member to-day had he not joined as a young lad many years ago. I really think he once was a truly believing man, but he has compromised so much with his conscience that the inner light has utterly failed him now. He absolutely refuses to use his immense influence to better our social conditions. His excuse always is, 'As long as men are men you will have these evils in Bronson and there is no use making trouble over it.' "

"I think I am beginning to understand what you are driving at," said Allan Rutledge, quietly. "These men

think that it is useless to fight against the evils which you claim are eating the heart and life out of our churches and community."

"Exactly," said the other.

"That expression of Mr. Marchmont's, 'As long as men are men these evils must be tolerated,' shows wherein he differs from the teachings of Christianity. By the grace of God, Mr. Townley," continued Allan, rising to his feet in his earnestness and speaking with great emotion, "I shall yet make Bronson see that these evils are tolerated not because men are men, but because they are *not* men. They are only half men, quarter men, sixteenth men, miserable manikins. Bronson can be made as clean inside as it is outside if once the people of Bronson, the Christian people, can learn the manly and essential principles of Christianity. These principles need to be applied to the social life of Bronson, and I will apply them."

The firm jaws of the Western minister looked rigid as he finished these words, and Albert Townley could see that the new pastor of Central Church would be a force to be reckoned with in the future life of Bronson. He felt, somehow, that Allan Rutledge had something which he lacked.

"I must confess to you, Dr. Rutledge," the Bronson minister continued, "that I look on my own ministry here as a failure. When I came here two years ago I believed I could regenerate the community. I determined to know nothing amongst these people ex-

cept the perfect Christ, and I felt sure that, seeing his beauty of character, men would follow him."

Allan Rutledge looked keenly at his friend and remarked, "You were perfectly justified in holding up the perfect Christ, for His is the spotless life and the ideal character, but you left out an important part, a fundamental part of the Gospel. Bronson needs to-day not a perfect ideal of character. They need a redeeming Christ."

Albert Townley did not seem to notice just what his companion had said as he was full of his own thoughts and he went on, "I was assured that if I explained the Bible in the light of modern scholarship that the community would again take it as the rule of faith and practice, but the Bible is mere folly to men like Graham and Marchmount, and I have failed, as far as I know, to interest a single soul in its message through my scientific explanations."

Albert Townley spoke sadly and looked in a helpless way at the new minister.

"My brother, I begin to see why your ministry has been so fruitless," said Allan, kindly. "You have stood before the people explaining about the texture of the cordage in the life-line. You ought to have thrown out the life-line boldly in the name of the Lord. A war is on and you have been lecturing on the fine quality of the steel in the sword which you hold in your hand as a soldier. You ought to have cut right and left with the sword, and hewn the enemies of men

into pieces. Nay, brother," continued Allan, laying his hand affectionately on the shoulder of his younger companion, "the people of Bronson have been starving for bread, and you have held up a loaf and discoursed learnedly and eloquently about the chemical constituents of the bread, while the people perish with hunger. Give them the bread of life, the bread of life," said Allan, in conclusion, "and they will live."

"But they do not want the bread of life," said Townley, still bowing his head in dejection. "The people of Bronson have no interest in vital religion as you will soon find out."

"No, no," replied Allan Rutledge, confidently. "I think I know something of the human heart. Men do really hunger for the bread of life. If they know where to find it they become eager in their search."

"The only really active force in Bronson to-day," replied Townley, "is Socialism. Our working people are getting fanatical about it and it has become a religion with numbers of them. Already they have elected two aldermen on our council."

"Socialism, as these men understand it, is a wild dream," answered Allan, "but I am not at all surprised that Socialism should flourish in Bronson. The soil is just right for such a crop. Men are crying out for brotherhood and if the church cannot answer the cry men will seek brotherhood where they think they can find it."

It was getting late and the two men arose to go.

"Let me thank you most heartily for what you have told me to-day," said Allan Rutledge. "I felt God had some real work for me in Bronson, but I see my task is more responsible than I had expected. Pray for me, brother, pray for me. I wish to make no mistakes, but I am determined to do what is in my power to make the Kingdom of God come in Bronson."

As they stepped out on the street they saw the throngs of working men walking from the factories to their homes. Allan looked upon them with interest and sympathy. A tear came to his eye and he said to himself, "Men, the workers; men, my brothers."

As they walked down the main street the crowds kept growing, and soon it was evident that something was happening on the street. There were cries and shouts, and a great mob was coming toward the ministers.

"What's the matter?" asked Allan Rutledge, as they stepped into a doorway in order to escape from the crush.

"I think the strikers have been getting into trouble," answered Mr. Townley. "One of our factories which employs mostly women and girls has been having a strike lately, and the Court has issued an injunction against picketing, and I expect the police are enforcing the injunction."

Just then a number of policemen came along, each leading a young woman, whom they were evidently seeking to take to the city jail near by. The girls had been arrested for disobeying the injunction of the

Court, as Mr. Townley had conjectured. Among them was the leader of the strike, a young-looking woman, Lena Myers. A big, burly policeman was leading her along by the arm. In front of the doorway where the two ministers were standing the crowd became so dense that the progress of the officers of the law was stopped for a few moments, and the leader of the strikers took advantage of the occasion to begin a speech.

"Friends," shouted Lena Myers, "we women are striking because we want to be able to live respectable lives." The crowd became attentive at once and the girl continued, "Everyone looks down on a bad girl, but we girls are compelled to go astray as long as—"

"Shut up," said the policeman who held her arm, giving her a shake and adding an oath to his peremptory command.

The crowd jeered and shouted at the officers of the law and its aspect became threatening. Other policemen appeared and forced a way through the crowd, and the girls and their captors soon passed out of sight.

"You see we have many problems in Bronson," said Townley, looking after the crowd which followed in the wake of the policemen.

Allan Rutledge made no answer, but to himself he said, "I can well understand that Socialism will grow in Bronson."

"Such sights as that on our streets are an open evi-

dence that all is not well with us," continued Albert Townley. "Do you think you can help us?"

He turned to the Iowa minister as he spoke.

"I can," replied the other, "but it will mean something."

The two ministers separated and as Townley walked home he pondered about Allan Rutledge and his ministry in Bronson. "I truly believe," he said to himself, "that he can and will help us, but there will be an upheaval. The time is ripe for Bronson's regeneration."

CHAPTER III.

REGINALD NELSON GETS A JOB.

Reginald Nelson awoke in Bronson the morning after his arrival with a feeling of loneliness. It was late before he opened his eyes, as he had been wearied with the excitement of his long journey from England and previous sleepless nights. Refusing to accept the proffered hospitality of Mr. Townley, he had spent the night at the hotel.

Far from every friend of his youth, in a new world, beginning life anew in strange surroundings, the young Englishman experienced the heartache called homesickness.

He looked out of the hotel window and gazed absent-mindedly upon the busy scene presented on the street below. Already the stores were open and the busy tread of the city's toilers resounded on the walks. Street cars glided past, the motormen clanging the bell, automobiles rushed along, wagons and carriages crowded the street. Everything seemed far away to Reginald Nelson and there was a touch of unreality in it all.

"All the others have a place in life here, but I am outside," he said to himself, sadly.

Arousing himself with an effort from his sombre reflections, he began to think over his plans for the day.

He decided to spend the entire day in going around the city and seeing its streets, residences, factories and stores.

"I shall also have to find a boarding-house," he said to himself, beginning to take fresh interest in his new life.

After breakfast he procured a map of the city and made himself familiar with the principal streets and public buildings, and then set out to look over the city in which he planned to begin his life in America. Bronson is a picturesque city, located in the southern part of Michigan, amid a rich farming country. Several railroads run through the city and the exceptional shipping advantages have tended to foster large manufacturing plants. Several important educational institutions also add to the fame of the place, and attract students from all parts of Michigan and from the surrounding states. The chief residence streets are broad boulevards, macadamized, and lined with shade trees. As Reginald Nelson walked around the city it was difficult for him to realize that this beautiful city had sprung into existence within the lifetime of many of its residents, and that seventy years before the site was nothing but a bleak wilderness.

"I feel like saying as the Queen of Sheba did that 'the half was never told me' when I look on this busy hive of industry and life," he said to himself. "Joy Graham certainly has a right to be proud of Bronson."

He wondered where the home of the girl was located and longed to see her again.

After viewing the residence part of the city Reginald

took the street car through the manufacturing section. In the distance the smoking factories added to the picturesqueness of the scene, but Reginald was greatly disappointed when he had a closer view. The cottages in which the working men lived were more squalid, he thought, than the average cottage of the working man in England. The large factories also had a temporary appearance, and dirt, disorder and waste seemed to him to be apparent on every hand. The most imposing shop was the large railway shop employing an army of workmen, and fitted up with every kind of mechanical appliances.

Late in the afternoon he began to search for a boarding-house and found a modest home on a quiet street where he engaged a room from a middle-aged couple. After moving his few belongings to his new home he had a feeling of rest and satisfaction, and his outlook on the future became more rose-colored. He found the husband and wife with whom he was to lodge and board agreeable and kindly, and they at once took pains to make the young immigrant feel at home. Their name was Cameron and Reginald could easily tell that his host was a Scotchman by his accent.

The next day the young immigrant began the serious work of getting a job and establishing himself in the life of the community. He had not seen Albert Townley since he parted from him at the hotel after his arrival, and he did not wish to trouble the young minister further until he had found work.

Accordingly he decided first to visit the law firm of Millman and Graham and present his letter of in-

troduction, and ask them to assist him in getting a position. He had little trouble in finding the office as it was on the main street. He entered the outer office and although it was still early in the morning he found a number of callers waiting to see the lawyers. He took his seat with the rest and surveyed the little company. It was certainly a cosmopolitan little gathering. An Italian woman and her baby; an old German, with long hair; two Irishmen, and three or four others whose nationality Reginald guessed to be Slavic, made up the company. The old German grumbled something in broken English about the uselessness of lawyers, and the folly of laws; the baby began to cry and its mother hummed an Italian baby-song; the two Irishmen expressed impatience at the delay in seeing their lawyer. "Shure, we've lost an hour already, do ye mind?" said one of them, looking at his watch.

In a little while a young man came out of the inner office and took the names of all. Instead of telling his name, Reginald gave the clerk his letter of introduction. The young man disappeared into the room and the little company waited expectantly. He soon reappeared and asked Reginald to enter first. The envious eyes of the others followed the immigrant as he walked into the private offices of Millman and Graham.

A stately, important-looking man, about fifty years of age, greeted Reginald cordially.

"I am Mr. Graham," he said, heartily, reaching out his hand. "You are Reginald Nelson, I believe. I am glad to meet you. My wife and daughter came over on the same boat with you from Europe."

Reginald had not expected this cordiality and was somewhat confused, but managed to answer: "I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Graham and your daughter. Mr. Townley introduced me."

"They have been telling me about you," continued the lawyer. "You have come to make your home in Bronson, I understand."

"Yes, I am an immigrant, and I expect to settle in America, and spend my life here."

"Good," replied Mr. Graham, smilingly. "Our country needs strong, active young fellows like you. How old are you, Mr. Nelson?"

"I was twenty-four on my last birthday."

"Indeed! You look a little older than that. What kind of employment do you wish?"

"I would like to get into a newspaper office, if possible," answered Reginald. "If that is not possible at first I wish to begin somewhere at the bottom of the ladder."

"Good," again repeated Mr. Graham, looking keenly at the young fellow. "I do not think there is an opening at present in any of our newspaper offices, but the agent of one of our railroad depots spoke to me just yesterday about needing a new clerk. Would you care to begin in a railroad office?"

"It will be all right, certainly," replied Reginald, promptly.

Just then the door of the office opened and Joy Graham entered her father's office. At the sight of the immigrant she blushed slightly and paused, but quickly recovering herself, she stepped up to him, say-

ing: "How are you, Mr. Nelson? I am glad to see you again."

Mr. Graham had turned to his desk to write a note introducing Reginald to the station agent. Hearing his daughter's voice, he turned around quickly and saw the two young people shake hands with great cordiality. His keen eyes saw the little flush on the cheeks of both and the mutual pleasure which glanced from their eyes.

"What is it, Joy?" he asked, somewhat abruptly.

The girl dropped Reginald's hand quickly, looking embarrassed.

"I came in to ask you, papa," she said, in a low voice, "if I might call at the jail this morning to see those poor girls who were imprisoned last night. Mama said it would be all right if you did not mind."

"Do you mean, Joy, that you want to associate with those female law-breakers who have been disturbing the peace of our city? No, no, child, let such people alone."

"But I only wanted to take them a few flowers. The papers say they are all good girls who were put in jail."

"I could not think of allowing you to give those striking work-women any encouragement. They have broken the injunction law and they must pay the penalty. They are no better than other criminals."

Mr. Graham frowned sternly as he spoke, and his daughter saw that further discussion would be useless.

There was a suspicion of a tear in her eyes as she

turned away, but she said bravely: "All right, father. I would not go if you would not like it."

Then she turned to Reginald and with a little nod of her head said to him: "Good-day, Mr. Nelson. I am glad to see you in Bronson."

After she had gone Mr. Graham wrote the note of introduction, but Reginald imagined that he was not as cordial as before. In a rather gruff way he handed the note to the young man, saying, "This will introduce you to the agent and I think he can put you to work at once."

Reginald was profuse in his thanks and Mr. Graham finally bade him good-morning in a more gracious tone.

With his heart still throbbing from his brief interview with Joy Graham, and feeling that his note of introduction to the station agent gave him a footing of some sort among his fellow men in Bronson, Reginald walked with light step to the depot, and was soon ushered into the presence of the station agent. The agent was a large, kindly-looking man, who almost filled the little apartment in which he sat at his desk. Reginald handed him his note of introduction and waited anxiously while the agent opened and perused it.

"You want a job, hey?" was the first greeting, as he looked up suddenly from the letter.

"If—if you need someone," stammered Reginald, rather confused by the agent's abrupt manner.

"I need another clerk, sure thing," responded the agent, "but the question is, will you do?"

By this time Reginald had recovered his self-possession, and he answered promptly: "Give me the place for a week and I think I will be able to satisfy you."

"Have you had any experience?" again queried the agent, looking the young immigrant over.

"I have had quite a good deal of experience in office work in England. If you should need any typewriting done I have had a good deal of that to do."

"Do you know shorthand and typewriting?" asked the agent, quickly.

"Yes. I learned that a year or two ago for amusement, never expecting to use it, but I am fairly proficient now."

"You're just the man I want," said the agent, with decision. "I need someone to help me with my correspondence and if you can run a typewriter I want you to begin work at once. When can you start?"

"I am ready any time," said Reginald, feeling strangely happy over his first job in Bronson. "I can begin right now, or immediately after dinner to-day."

"It will be all right after dinner. I will look for you at one o'clock."

The brusque agent turned to his desk, and Reginald walked out on the street, feeling that he had the earth under him once more.

"I have my foot on the bottom rung of the ladder," he said to himself. "I may not climb all the way from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies, but I hope I can climb up a few rungs."

That afternoon Reginald Nelson began his work in the railway freight office. He assisted the agent in

caring for his correspondence and also attended to some minor clerical work. There were five other men in the office; the cashier, assistant cashier, the bill clerk, the rate clerk and the car-number clerk, as the agent designated them when introducing Reginald. The other clerks were surprised at the rapidity with which he adapted himself to the work of the office, especially when they found out he had never worked in a railroad office before. During the first afternoon, when the most of the work for the day had been disposed of, the office employees began several discussions of various matters. Reginald listened with absorbed interest to the talk, but took no part in it. One subject of interest to them all was baseball, a game of which Reginald had heard, but which he had never seen. The English game which corresponds to baseball is cricket, a game in which Reginald was an expert.

Later on the conversation turned to political matters and as a national election was approaching the interest in this subject was intense. Every political party seemed to be represented in the small office force, Reginald judged from the talk.

Finally, something brought up the matter of civic affairs, and the discussion among the clerks waxed warm.

"We have a fine lot of guys running this town, haven't we?" said the bill clerk, in a tone of disgust.

"What's the matter with you and our city administration?" responded the cashier, who was a tall, handsome man, with an aristocratic air.

"The arrest of those girls last night was an out-

rage," said the bill clerk, angrily. "One would think we were living in Turkey instead of free America."

Reginald Nelson stopped his work and listened to the conversation.

"Those girls need not think they can defy our Courts and get away with it," answered the cashier haughtily. "They tell me that the whole lot of the strikers are a crowd that is not much credit to Bronson."

"They lie when they attack the character of those girls," shouted the now thoroughly incensed bill clerk. All the other clerks had now dropped their pens and were listening to the dialogue.

"That's right, Bill," interposed the rate clerk, addressing the defender of the striking factory-women. "Those girls are all right and that one that you are buzzing around is a fine-looking damsel, all right."

The bill clerk blushed and was silent, and Reginald knew the reason why he was so ardent in his denunciation of the attacks on the girls.

"Well," responded the cashier, apologetically, "I think that most of them may be all right, but the pack they arrested need to be in jail."

"You poor fool," exclaimed the other, looking at his fellow clerk with scorn, "those girls they arrested are the very pick of the lot and the rotten city administration knew it."

"Right again," interposed the rate clerk, further. "I think I saw your girl among those who were 'jugged', didn't I?"

"I am not ashamed to have her put in jail for try-

ing to improve conditions in that factory," replied the bill clerk, stoutly. "I tell you it is no wonder the Socialists carried two wards at the last election. I have a good mind to turn Socialist myself."

The cashier made no further remarks and the subject was dropped.

Reginald had listened with intent interest to this discussion. He remembered the request of Joy Graham in her father's office, and her desire to visit some girls at the jail.

"Perhaps I might take them some flowers for her," he said to himself. "Some time later I will tell her about it."

When they left the office Reginald joined the bill clerk and they walked up the street together.

"I have a friend," began Reginald, abruptly, "who wanted to take some flowers to those girls who have been put in jail."

"I thought you were a stranger here, sir," answered the bill clerk, somewhat ungraciously, "and that you had no acquaintances in Bronson."

"I met Mrs. Graham and her daughter on the boat on my voyage across the Atlantic," replied Reginald, "and I happen to know that Miss Joy Graham would be glad if the girls had some flowers."

"Well, what of it?" said the other.

"I thought if you would go with me to the jail this evening I will bring some flowers and have them distributed as a gift from a young lady who sympathizes with them."

The bill-clerk looked closely at Reginald, much sur-

prised at his proposition. After a short silence he answered, in a somewhat more cordial tone, "That will be all right. The girls will appreciate the kindness. I will meet you at the Y. M. C. A. steps and we will visit the jail together."

That evening the imprisoned strikers enjoyed greatly their gift of flowers brought to them in the name of "a young lady of Bronson."

A few days later an incident happened in the freight office which proved to Reginald that he had won a place amongst his fellow workers. He was assisting the bill clerk in way-billing freight, and, being unaccustomed to the names of the smaller cities in America, he made a mistake in way-billing a large consignment of freight, and when the shipment reached its destination there was an overcharge of about twenty dollars. The rule of the railroad office was that such mistakes must be made good by the clerk at fault, and Reginald was dismayed to see such a large part of his first month's salary lost in this way. However, the bill clerk quietly interviewed the other clerks around the station, and three-fourths of the amount was raised amongst them before Reginald knew anything of their purpose. The little act of kindness touched the young immigrant, and he was loath at first to accept the assistance, but his fellow-workers insisted.

"They know what brotherhood is," Reginald said to himself, as he walked home that evening from the office. "I must show them that I appreciate the whole-souled way in which they have received me amongst them."

In every possible way Reginald sought to be obliging in the office and in a few weeks he was a favorite with the agent and his fellow clerks, as well as the other employees around the station.

A lame colored man was the janitor, and towards the black man as towards the others, Reginald was uniformly courteous, winning the devotion of the negro.

"Dat Massa Nelson is a mighty fine gemman, Boss," the negro janitor often said. "He sho' is."

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE CENTRAL CHURCH.

Mr. Cameron, with whom Reginald Nelson lodged, was a devout man and an officer in the Central Church of Bronson. He was very enthusiastic over the new pastor who had just been called to the church.

"You will like our new minister," he said to Reginald several times before the first Sunday came around.

Reginald always tried to turn the conversation when church matters came up and Mr. Cameron soon detected that his young boarder was not at all an ardent churchman.

When he retired on Saturday evening the young man pleaded extreme weariness and asked to be allowed to spend the forenoon in bed on Sunday morning. This was altogether contrary to the principles of both Mr. and Mrs. Cameron, but the lonely immigrant seemed weary and worn and they readily agreed not to disturb him.

At the dinner table Mr. Cameron was more enthusiastic than ever about the new minister.

"Man," he said, earnestly, with his broad Scotch accent, "you ought to have been oot this mornin' and heard Dr. Rutledge. He's a power."

Allan Rutledge had laid special emphasis on his evening sermon during the announcements of the morning and Mr. Cameron told Reginald that he was going to preach on "Christianity and the Brotherhood of Man."

"That is a good subject," said Reginald, showing a little interest, much to the delight of the Scotchman.

"It is," answered Mr. Cameron. "Come with me this evening, and I will introduce you to the minister. A young stranger like you will want to make new friends here."

Accordingly, somewhat to his own surprise, Reginald found himself worshipping that first Sunday evening which he spent in Bronson in the magnificent Central Church. On entering he looked around with interest at the large, modern church building, capable of seating over 1200 worshippers. Although they arrived early the church was already filled with an immense audience which thronged the main auditorium, the galleries, and even the Sunday-school rooms on the side.

In order to get a seat the Camerons and Reginald were compelled to go up to the very front seat. The whole church was alive with interest and the enthusiasm of the immense congregation pleased the immigrant. He had spent a lonely, miserable morning alone in his room, and he was glad he had come to church. The large choir slowly filed in and filled the choir loft in front of the magnificent pipe organ. This

great organ was pealing out the opening notes of the service, and the crowd gradually hushed itself into silence.

Reginald awaited the appearance of the much-talked-of minister. A door at the rear of the pulpit rostrum opened, and Allan Rutledge walked slowly to his seat behind the sacred desk.

Reginald regarded him with intense interest. Seating himself on the chair, the minister bowed for a brief moment, covering his face with his hand. Then he sat up straight and looked out over the sea of faces.

"What a fine specimen of a man," was Reginald's inward thought as he gazed towards the pulpit. Allan Rutledge was a man who could not help but attract attention. He was past thirty years of age; his hair, coal-black; his eyes, dark and piercing; his brow, smooth and high. When he arose to announce the first hymn there was an air of mastery and self-possession about him which showed him a real leader of men. Reginald was now congratulating himself more than ever that he had been persuaded to attend church that evening, and he entered into the spirit of the service, when something unexpected happened. Just before the sermon the organ began to play softly and a young lady arose in the choir. Reginald started. It was Joy Graham. Being intent in observing the minister he had not paid much attention to the choir and had failed to see the girl among the rest. The young immigrant sat spellbound as she sang "A Little Bit of Love." Her flexible, well-controlled voice filled the entire church with its melody, and almost the entire congre-

gation melted into tears as she finished the song, singing with intense feeling, "Oh, the world is dying for a little bit of love."

Allan Rutledge arose to preach. His face was the picture of health and strength, and before he uttered a word men could see that he had a message in his soul and that he had the power to deliver it.

"Who is my neighbor?" he exclaimed. "These words you will find in Luke, the tenth chapter and the twenty-ninth verse."

The minister paused a moment and then proceeded: "That is always the question. Men love their neighbors as themselves, but the question is, 'Who is my neighbor?' "

The words were thought-provoking and Reginald Nelson was all attention. The speaker then set forth the different answers to this question which have been given at different times, all of the answers partial and inadequate.

"Who is my neighbor?" he exclaimed once more. Then in vivid language he pictured the story with which the Lord Jesus had answered this vital question. "To-day in theory," continued the preacher, "we accept the answer of the parable. 'The brotherhood of man is scientifically taught in our schools; the unity of the human race is an axiom; the desired end which lovers of men everywhere seek is to make this brotherhood a reality. How shall it be done?'"

Once more the speaker paused. The great audience was listening breathlessly.

"Christianity and the fundamental principles of

Christianity alone can make a brotherhood of man. Many of you have lost faith in these fundamental principles, but that is because you do not understand. The Christian religion teaches three essential doctrines, the sinfulness of men, the universal redemption found in Christ, and the common work of upbuilding the Kingdom of God on earth."

Reginald Nelson was now listening with eagerness. The old doctrines of his ancestors' religion had lost their power for him. He did not wish to be a sceptic, but faith seemed to him impossible. He felt that there was something about Allan Rutledge different from the conventional minister, and he hoped to gain new light for his soul. His mind was receptive and he drank in the preacher's words as a thirsty man drinks water.

"What I wish to prove to-night," continued Allan Rutledge, "is that these fundamental doctrines are fitted as nothing else is, to promote real brotherhood among men. Mark you, I am not now trying to prove these doctrines are true, but I will convince you of their practical utility in actual life to-day."

The preacher then set forth the argument that a common danger unites men in a real brotherhood, illustrating his point by a vivid illustration of an ocean liner sinking at sea.

"When the common danger is realized," he exclaimed, "every barrier between first, second and third class vanishes, and those passengers become brethren at once. The three classes are now men, women and children, and the weakest are first. The common dan-

ger which threatens every man on account of sin breaks down ever barrier where men truly accept the Christian teachings, and makes men realize their brotherhood."

Reginald was dumfounded with this argument in favor of a doctrine which had become very distasteful to him, but he listened as the speaker continued.

"A common salvation unites men in a brotherhood and the salvation offered to men in the Gospel makes men feel their kinship."

Again he illustrated his sermon by referring to the rescued survivors of an ocean wreck when they found themselves safe in the life-boats.

"In those life-boats there is no division of classes. First, second and third class have vanished. Once more the only classes are men, women and children, and the weakest are first. A common salvation, according to an unalterable psychological law, breaks down every barrier and causes men to realize their brotherhood. The common salvation in Christ makes it easy and natural for the Christian scholar to feel his kinship with his brother Christian in ignorance. Class distinctions disappear. The rich and poor become brethren."

Not only Reginald, but many other auditors in the church were hearing something new as the preacher set forth the doctrines of Christianity in this way. Judged by their capacity for social service Reginald saw a new value in doctrines which he had judged meaningless and useless. But it was the preacher's crowning argument that won Reginald as a disciple.

"A common work unites men," said the minister, and Reginald at once remembered how the common work of the office force at the railroad station had developed brotherhood which bore fruit in his own case when his loss was shared by all.

"Pioneers in Iowa, which is my native State," said the preacher, "have often told me how there was a brotherhood amongst the first settlers that seemed to disappear as civilization moved westward. The explanation is simple. At first the early settlers had a common task. They were all engaged in bringing the fertile soil under the plow and laying the foundations of a new empire. Do we not have the Brotherhood of Engineers, the Brotherhood of Firemen, the brotherhoods of the various departments of labor? It is a psychological law that a common task promotes brotherhood. Christianity gives to all men part in a common task. This task is nothing else than the up-building on our earth of the Kingdom of God, the creation of a new world, here and now, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In this noble labor every true Christian has a part, no matter what your social position may be or what place you occupy in the economic world."

The sermon closed with a powerful illustration in which the preacher pictured a company on the platform gathered out of every race and tribe on earth. "Here is an Englishman," he exclaimed dramatically, looking directly at Reginald. "Here is a Frenchman. Here is a German. Here is a Chinaman. Here is a Negro, and here are all the rest. Now, these men

absolutely believe the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ. They believe they were lost through sin; they believe they have been redeemed through Christ; they believe they have a common task in the bringing in amongst men of the Kingdom of God. Let these men stand here and let them sing to you a Christian hymn. What will it be? There is one hymn that would come spontaneously from that cosmopolitan group. It is this:

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.”

The sermon was over. The great congregation sang as a closing hymn the word which the preacher had repeated, and the heartiness of the singing showed that the minister had touched a responsive chord.

“Let me introduce you to Dr. Rutledge.” The voice of Mr. Cameron awoke Reginald from his spell after the benediction had been pronounced and before he knew just what was happening Mr. Cameron was leading him to the pulpit steps.

“Here is a young man that I want you to meet, Dr. Rutledge,” said Mr. Cameron. “He just arrived in Bronson from England a few days ago.”

The minister shook the immigrant’s hand warmly.

“I have been in England,” he said, “and I assure you it gives me pleasure to welcome you to America. You will find life here.”

"That is just what Mr. Townley told me when I met him on the liner," replied Reginald, impressed with the similarity of their greetings.

"Oh, yes," said the minister. "I know who you are now. Mr. Townley spoke to me about meeting you. I am delighted to see you here. So you are acquainted with Mr. Cameron."

The kindly Scotchman was standing close by and hearing his name spoken, he turned and said:

"The lad is staying with us. He works at the railroad office."

Others were pressing forward and Allan Rutledge held out his hand again to Reginald.

"Can you come and see me to-morrow night? I would like very much to have a visit with you."

"I shall be much pleased to do so," said the young man.

Mr. Cameron and Reginald were turning to go when a girl's voice startled the immigrant by exclaiming:

"How well you sing, Mr. Nelson! We could hear you in the choir join in that last hymn. You must come into the choir. We need another tenor voice."

"How well *you* sing, Miss Graham," answered Reginald, turning to face the lawyer's daughter, who had hurried from the choir to greet him. "I wish to thank you for that song of yours to-night. It did the lonely heart of an immigrant good.

There was a pathos in his voice and a deep look in his eyes which the girl noticed, and she answered

quickly, "You must join our choir and get acquainted with our young people and you will not feel lonesome in Bronson."

"Thank you," he responded earnestly, and bade her good-night.

"Where did you meet Miss Graham?" asked Mr. Cameron, as they walked home together.

"She and her mother and Mr. Townley crossed in the same boat with me," explained Reginald, and then he told of the way in which he had happened to choose Bronson as his home in America.

"You have made no mistake, young man, in coming to Bronson," said the Scotchman, "especially since we have a man like Allan Rutledge in our town. We needed him, for we were growing to be a city without a soul. I miss my guess if he does not bring a new conscience into Bronson and change many things that have troubled me of late."

"He is essentially a preacher," said Reginald. "It was kind of him to ask me to call on him to-morrow night. I will be glad to go."

"You will find his family as good as himself," said Mr. Cameron, with enthusiasm. "Mrs. Rutledge is a genuine lady. She has travelled a great deal, and she will give you a welcome to the Manse. They have two dear little children, Abraham and Anna. Anna is just a baby, but Abraham is a sturdy little fellow, about three years old. They say the children are called after Abraham Lincoln and Anne Rutledge, as you know our minister is a descendant of that famous family, the Rutledges."

"Is that so?" replied Reginald. "I am delighted to know it. Abraham Lincoln has always been my ideal of a man. The influence of that man on the life of the world is incalculable."

The next morning at the office Reginald was somewhat surprised to find that the new minister of the Central Church was the chief topic of conversation. Most of the clerks had attended the church on the previous evening and had heard his discourse on the brotherhood of man.

"There is some sense to preaching of that kind," said the bill clerk, whom his companions called familiarly "Bill."

"Right you are, Bill," responded the rate clerk. "I was there myself. The sermon was good, but the song that girl sang was the best part of the service for me."

"Dr. Rutledge is too sensational and too emphatic for me," put in the cashier, in a disparaging tone of voice. "I don't think the educated people of Bronson will pay much attention to him. He is not the equal of Mr. Townley by any means. Any one can see he is an old fogey in his theology. That kind of stuff won't go in Bronson."

"I venture to predict that Dr. Rutledge will make it 'go' whether people want it or not," interposed Reginald, taking part in the conversation for the first time. "He evidently does not try to please either the educated or the uneducated, but he presents some fine ideas in regard to religion. He is the first man who has interested me in a sermon for several years."

Just then the agent came in and sat down, puffing,

at his desk. "Say, boys," he called out to his office force, "wasn't that a great sermon by the new preacher last night? That man seems as sure of his ground as an engineer who has his orders in his pocket. He just opens the throttle and if you don't want to get run over you have to clear the track."

None of the clerks ventured an answer to their chief, and the agent continued: "He is going to wake up the Central Church and I'm glad of it. Ever since I became a member of that church I have felt a chill come over me at the Sunday services, but Dr. Rutledge is going to warm things up."

Reginald entered the agent's apartment to assist him with his correspondence, and the clerks were soon busied with their work.

That very morning in the law offices of Millman and Graham, Mr. Graham held a conversation with a prominent member of the Central Church.

"How is our new preacher going to suit?" asked Graham, enquiringly.

"He'll suit a lot of people and he'll get the crowds all right, but I didn't like his talk last night at all."

"I wasn't out last night," answered the lawyer. "What did he preach about?"

"Oh, he tried to bolster up the old-fashioned theology that our fathers used to believe, said a lot about 'social justice' and 'the brotherhood of man.' I don't think our new-thought people will be satisfied."

"I met Deacon Cameron on his way to work this

morning," said Graham, and he was bubbling over with enthusiasm. He looks on Rutledge as a regular prophet."

Both of the men laughed heartily at the Scotchman's well-known respect for an earnest minister.

"What I am afraid of," continued Graham's companion, "is that Dr. Rutledge will drive away our cultured people and fill the pews of the Central Church with a lot of common folks. That will never do, you know."

Mr. Graham looked puzzled for a moment and then answered cheerfully:

"Don't worry about the prospects of the church. It is too soon to judge. Rutledge was a big success in Iowa. He comes from a good family, and he is an educated, cultured gentleman. Personally, I am much pleased with him. Of course, I know little and care less about his theology."

The two friends separated, but Mr. Graham's companion left the office gravely shaking his head.

CHAPTER V.

GETTING ACQUAINTED.

The next evening after Reginald Nelson's visit to the Central Church he was walking slowly in the direction of the home of Allan Rutledge. The immigrant had been much impressed with the personality and cordial spirit of the Iowa minister and he was anticipating an evening of pleasure in his home. As he walked along the young Englishman began to reflect on his good fortune during his first days in the new world.

"Here I am," he said to himself, "a stranger in a strange land, and yet, already I am feeling more at home in Bronson than I ever felt amongst the residents of Beachville although I spent my whole life almost beside the place. I feared I was making a plunge into an abyss in my resentment, but I find real life here such as I have never known before. Still I wonder what the family would think if they knew all about me now." The young man smiled grimly at the last thought.

Reginald Nelson was feeling peculiarly happy that evening. He had now completely mastered his duties at the railroad office and could perform them with ease so that his position as a clerk was secure. Be-

sides on that day he had two callers at the office. Mr. Townley had called for a brief visit and congratulated him on his success in getting a foothold so quickly.

"I told you," said the minister, smilingly, "that you would find life and all that life means in the New World."

But Reginald Nelson's other visitor was the one who had really shed a glow over that entire afternoon. To his astonishment and to the intense interest of his fellow-clerks, Joy Graham entered the office and enquired for him. He was diligently at work in the agent's small apartment, busy at the typewriter, when she called, and the rate clerk ushered her into Reginald's presence.

"Good afternoon," she exclaimed, cordially, as she greeted him. "This is where you are working, is it? I hope you like your place."

The immigrant was visibly embarrassed. Such an informal visit from a young lady in Joy Graham's position would have been impossible in his old associations in England and her unexpected appearance astounded him.

Quickly noticing his embarrassment, Joy Graham went on, in an apologetic tone:

"Excuse me, Mr. Nelson, for troubling you at this time, but I have quite a favor to ask of you."

By this time Reginald was himself again, and he was on his feet offering the young lady a seat.

"No, thank you," she answered in gracious tones, "I can only remain a moment. I will explain my errand at once."

Reginald was now completely under the spell of those two shining black eyes, which had attracted him the moment he first saw Joy Graham on the deck of the liner. The little stuffy office melted away and he was in dreamland. He felt a strange joy in his soul that she should notice him as she was doing.

"Can you come?" Joy Graham was saying these words when Reginald came back to earth. In his excitement he did not hear the first part of her conversation.

"Excuse me," he said, in confusion. "What was that?"

"Our Tourist Club meets this week on Thursday evening at my home and we are to visit London," repeated the girl. "We would like to have you with us and give us a talk on your great English city. Can you come?"

"Oh, yes, I see," stammered Reginald, beginning now to see the reason for the unexpected call of the girl.

"What is this Tourist Club?" he asked.

"A number of the young people of our church meet every two weeks and we have been going around the world in imagination. We have travelled through Ireland and Scotland, and we are now visiting in England. I remembered your descriptions of London and we

would all be delighted to have you with us next Thursday evening." Joy Graham smiled at him and made a little bow as she concluded.

"It will give me pleasure to meet with you," he responded. I have never described London before except in conversation, but I think I can get up a little talk."

Before leaving the girl repeated her hope that he would assist in the choir, saying, "The choir meets every Friday evening. If you join our Tourist Club and the choir you will not have time to get lonely, don't you know?"

Reginald laughed heartily at the little English inflection which the American girl gave to the last three words.

After the girl's departure there were whispered conversations amongst the other clerks, as all recognized her. The clerks were beginning to feel that the English immigrant was amongst them, but not of them. However, in no way did he assert himself or put on airs so that his evident social superiority added to the respect shown him by his fellow clerks, but did not in any way affect his popularity.

Reginald Nelson went over the details of Joy Graham's visit as he pondered to himself during his walk to the Central Church minister.

"I have only known her for two weeks," he said to himself, "but I feel as though we had been acquainted for years."

It was a warm September evening. The electric lights flashed amongst the trees which lined the Bron-

son streets. Through the windows Reginald caught glimpses of happy home life. Young men and women, talking vivaciously, passed him continuously. At the street corners, under the brilliant lights, groups of boys were still out enjoying their evening of fun.

"Townley was right," the immigrant exclaimed, speaking aloud in his earnestness. "I am finding life in America. Life, life."

The home in which Allan Rutledge lived was in an imposing building in one of the best residential districts in Bronson. Reginald rang the bell and was greeted by the minister himself, who was evidently awaiting him, and who warmly welcomed him.

"Come in, come in, sir," said the minister, heartily. "I am glad to see you to-night. You know I am almost a stranger myself in Bronson and we can sympathize with each other."

"People are not treating me as a stranger and an alien in Bronson," responded Reginald, cheerfully. "I am beginning to feel altogether at home in my novel surroundings."

The minister noticed the use of the word "novel," and also marked the general appearance of the immigrant and at once came to the conclusion Mr. Townley had reached when he met the young Englishman on the liner.

"He is no ordinary immigrant," thought Allan Rutledge as he gazed admiringly on the noble form of his guest.

"This is my young son, Abraham," said the minister, introducing Reginald to a young boy of about three

years of age. "He is a little fellow, but he is called after a great man. He is a namesake of Abraham Lincoln."

Reginald greeted the little fellow with genuine enthusiasm, as he was fond of children. The boy had been presented with a large hobby-horse a day or two before, and he brought it up proudly for Reginald's inspection. Then, mounting the horse confidently, the little namesake of America's great war President rode across the room in triumph.

"Bravo!" shouted Reginald, clapping his hands.

Turning to the father, Reginald noticed Allan Rutledge regarding his little son with tear-moistened eyes.

"My hope and prayer for my boy," he said, earnestly, in answer to the other's look, "is that he will be worthy to bear the name of Abraham Lincoln."

"He will be a noble man assuredly if he acquires a character like the noble Lincoln," responded Reginald, becoming serious. "Do you know that it was the life of Abraham Lincoln which first gave me a glimpse of what democracy means and of what life really is."

"I thought England was a democratic country and you are from England, are you not?" said Allan Rutledge.

"England is becoming democratic, much to the dismay and dread of the people amongst whom I lived," replied the young man, earnestly, "but I was educated as an aristocrat and taught to look with contempt on common people."

"Indeed," replied the minister, arching his eyebrows. "I did not know England taught any of her sons to

despise the common people in this day and age of the world. Where were you brought up in England, Mr. Nelson?"

The immigrant paused a moment before replying, and answered evasively, "I spent the most of my life in the south part of England, but let us leave England. Destiny has given that little island a large place in the history of men in the past thousand years, but I believe America is now to hold the future of the world."

"Good," exclaimed Allan Rutledge. "You are a desirable immigrant, for you come to us with faith."

Reginald was about to answer when they were interrupted by a lady entering the room, carrying a baby in her arms. She was a gracious-looking woman, quite young in appearance, with light flaxen hair and lustrous blue eyes.

"Come in, dear," said Allan Rutledge, as he noticed his wife at the door, for it was she who was entering. "Come in and meet the young Englishman I have been telling you about. Mr. Nelson, this is my wife."

The immigrant bowed low and extended his hand with a courtesy which showed that he was accustomed to mingle in the higher social circles.

"I am pleased to meet you, Mrs. Rutledge. What a lovely baby you have," he added, looking with admiration at the child in its mother's arms.

The young mother looked down fondly at her offspring, and Reginald thought he had never seen a more beautiful picture than mother and child made.

Allan Rutledge took the child in his arms, saying, "This is our daughter, Anna. She, too, is called after

a noble woman. Do you remember in the life of Abraham Lincoln that pathetic romance of his early days?"

"You mean the romance of Lincoln and Anne Rutledge?" responded Reginald quickly.

"Yes," said the minister. "Anne Rutledge was the sister of my grandfather, and I am proud of my Rutledge blood."

"You may well be," exclaimed the Englishman. "I would rather have the blood of the Rutledges in my veins than that of titled lords."

Allan Rutledge thought that the young man spoke the last words rather bitterly.

"In America," said the minister, smilingly, "blood does not count for much unless it is found in connection with character and worth. We have named our daughter Anna after Anne Rutledge."

"You seem to be fond of children," said Mrs. Rutledge to Reginald, noticing how much interest the young man took in watching the little Anna.

"You have two of the most interesting children I have ever seen," replied Reginald, with enthusiasm. "They are worthy of their names, Abraham and Anna."

"Thank you, Mr. Nelson," answered the mother, blushing.

From that moment Reginald Nelson had a true friend in Mrs. Rutledge. His words of commendation for her children completed and deepened the good impression which his first appearance had made on her.

After a short time Mrs. Rutledge retired with the two children, little Abraham carrying off his wooden

horse to bed with him. When they were left alone Allan Rutledge turned to his guest seriously and said, "I expect you have brought a church letter with you from your old home?"

"No," answered the other, stammeringly. "I—I did not go to church much in England."

"Ah," responded the other, in a somewhat disappointed tone; "I thought that all Englishmen like you were churchmen."

"My family, of course, were church people," replied Reginald, looking frankly at the minister, "and I was confirmed in the Episcopalian Church of England as a boy, but I lost faith in churches."

"Lost faith in churches!" exclaimed Allan Rutledge, in astonishment.

"I mean just what I say, Mr. Rutledge. For the past few years I have been interested in the politics of England and in questions of social reform. I found out that to-day the greatest barrier to real democracy and social reform in England is the church."

"You astonish me," responded Allan Rutledge.

"Listen to me, Dr. Rutledge," said the young Englishman, speaking with such intensity that the minister looked at him closely. Allan Rutledge could tell at once that the young man was in dead earnest, and he wondered at his growing excitement.

"Listen to me, Dr. Rutledge. There was a temperance bill before Parliament last winter which would have been a blessing to every part of England. Popular opinion was behind the bill, and we were sure of victory. This bill was defeated through the opposition

of clergymen who owned brewery stocks and who feared the bill would lessen their dividends. More than that," continued the youth, clenching his fist and unconsciously raising his voice, "our Archbishop of Canterbury was lately asked what his views were in regard to the labor problem that presses for solution in England, and he answered unabashed that he worked seventeen hours a day over the organization of the church and had no time left to think of the labor problem."

Allan Rutledge was silent and gazed at the immigrant, wondering who he was and what his place in life had been in England.

"I liked Keir Hardie's reply to the Archbishop," continued Reginald, after a pause. "He plainly told him that a religion which demanded seventeen hours a day for organization and left no time for a single thought about starving and despairing men and women and children had no message for this age. I agree with Hardie and so do tens of thousands of the young men of England to-day."

"It is all very different in America, I assure you," said Allan Rutledge, confidently. "In this country you will find that the churches stand for righteousness and humanity. If they did not I would not for a moment occupy a pulpit in any of our churches."

Reginald Nelson was silent, and the minister asked him abruptly, "Are your father and mother living, Mr. Nelson?"

A look of intense pain swept over the young man's face and he swallowed hard before answering. When

he spoke his voice seemed altered and hollow, utterly unlike his ringing tones of a moment ago when he was denouncing the church.

"My mother is dead," he said, slowly. "She died three years ago. I left a father and brother in England."

The young immigrant sat pensively absorbed in thought, and Allan Rutledge changed the subject again by speaking of his native state of Iowa.

"You know I am a native of Iowa. The Rutledges formerly lived in Illinois, but my branch of the family went to Iowa in its pioneer days. My good father and mother are still living on the old farm by the side of the Des Moines River. You will never know what America is, Mr. Nelson, until you visit the great Middle West."

"Tell me about your Iowa life," said Reginald, rousing himself.

Allan Rutledge began a description of the farm life of the Middle West, the pioneer experiences, the amalgamation of European races, the common life of the people.

Reginald listened intently, now and then asking questions, until the hour was getting late.

The minister saw that the young man now felt entirely at home, with him, and he asked him seriously, "Will you help us in our work of the Central Church, Mr. Nelson? We need young men like you, and the time for you to begin church activity is now."

"But I am not a member of the church," he replied, hesitatingly.

"We will see about your membership later. Meanwhile, do you think you could sing in the choir regularly? Miss Joy, one of our prominent young members, suggested your name to me to-day. She seems to have taken quite an interest in your welfare."

Reginald blushed and answered quickly, "You know I met Miss Joy Graham on the boat coming across the Atlantic. She has given me an invitation to the choir herself. I think I can join the choir."

"Fine," said the minister, with enthusiasm. "In my fishing for men I appreciate the help of young ladies like Miss Graham."

"By the way, Mr. Nelson, our young people in Central Church have what they call a Tourist Club, and they meet at Miss Graham's home next Thursday to visit London. I will see that you get an invitation, as you know London well, I am sure."

"I have already been invited," responded Reginald.

Allan Rutledge burst out laughing. "For a raw immigrant, Mr. Nelson, you already have a place in Bronson's social life that some do not attain in years."

The conversation then turned on the sermon of the minister the previous evening on the Brotherhood of Man.

"You have given me some new ideas, Dr. Rutledge. I hunted out my mother's Bible after I went home last night, and I have begun to re-read the Gospels with a new interest and a new point of view."

"Christianity is still practically untried in the world," rejoined the other. "I do not blame you for feeling outraged at the position taken on moral and

social questions by some clergymen in England. Such men are not ambassadors of Christ, but false prophets of Mammon. I fear there are some in America, but I have confidence that the heart of our American Christianity is sound. At any rate, it is going to be tested here some day soon just as the temperance bill in England tested the Christianity of the English Church."

Reginald Nelson walked home along the streets, still brilliant with electric lights, but now almost completely deserted, and thought over his conversation with the minister.

"Dr. Rutledge attracts me," he said to himself. "I shall attend his church, sing in the choir, and help him all I can, although it is little that I can do now to assist my friends in any way."

Thoughts of the choir recalled to his mind the picture of Joy Graham singing, "The World is Dying for a Little Bit of Love."

"Love," he said to himself. "Love. I have been seeking life. Heretofore I have scorned love. Perhaps in America I shall find love, and finding it, I shall find life also."

During the following days Reginald Nelson spent his leisure hours in recalling famous scenes in London, and in composing a talk which he expected to give before the Tourist Club.

When Thursday came he dressed himself with such unusual care that Mrs. Cameron exclaimed, when she saw him ready to go out, "Mercy me, Mr. Nelson, but you look like a fine gentleman to-night."

"Do I look all right to appear before the Tourist Club, Auntie?" asked Reginald, laughingly. He had begun to call her "Auntie," much to the good lady's pleasure.

"You look fine enough for a wedding," she replied. "A fine young fellow like you will have to watch out or some of these Bronson girls will get you."

"It's too soon to think of anything like that yet," answered the immigrant, lightly.

When he reached the Graham mansion he was ushered into the hall, where he was met by Joy Graham, who exclaimed enthusiastically, "Here is our real Londoner who will be our guide to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

JOY GRAHAM.

It was an animated scene to which Reginald Nelson was introduced in the Graham home. The Tourist Club was composed of about forty young people of both sexes. Most of them were under twenty-one years of age, but there were a few older. Joy Graham took Reginald in charge herself and presented him to the different members of the club, introducing him as "Mr. Reginald Nelson, our guide in London to-night, a real Englishman." The immigrant's self-possession and courteous greeting to them all made an impression on the company, and there were many guesses amongst them who Reginald Nelson might be.

Two of the older young men were standing side by side in an alcove, and after Joy Graham had introduced our hero to them, one of the two, whose name was George Caldwell, inquired of the other, "Who is that young man. He has the look and bearing of an English lord."

"Pshaw," answered the other, whose name was Roland Gregory, "he's nothing but an ordinary immigrant. Miss Joy happened to meet him on the boat coming across the Atlantic, and she is going foolish over him. I will have to stop it."

The two young men followed with their eyes Reginald and Joy as they passed around the room. The flashing dark eyes of the maiden, her animated appearance and the beauty of her form, and the handsome countenance and noble bearing of the young Englishman made them an interesting sight, but Roland Gregory frowned darkly when his companion called attention to the attractiveness of the two young people.

"He has the bearing of a gentleman, perhaps," he remarked, but he does not amount to much. He's only office boy at the freight office. I think we ought to make our Tourist Club more exclusive."

"Mark my words, Roland," replied the other, with decision, "if that young fellow remains in Bronson we will hear from him yet. He may even dispute your claims to Miss Joy."

"I'm not afraid of that. The matter is all settled and was before Miss Joy started for Europe."

"Don't be too sure," said his companion, moving away to greet another friend of the company.

These two young men, Roland Gregory and George Caldwell, were the leaders among the young people in the social circle connected with the Central Church. Both of them were about twenty-five years of age, and mature for their years. Roland Gregory's father had come to Bronson in an early day and was now one of the wealthiest men in the city. He had started his son in business, and the young man was manager and part owner of a large manufacturing plant. This plant employed mainly women and girls, and it was some of his

employees who had been arrested for picketing and to whom Reginald Nelson had taken flowers in jail. Joy Graham's father and the elder Gregory had been fast friends for many years, and the two families had always been on the closest terms of friendship.

The other young man, George Caldwell, was the son of a farmer who lived a few miles from Bronson. The young man had come to the city a few years before and entered one of the banks. Being capable and trustworthy, his rise had been rapid, and he was now the assistant cashier. Young Gregory kept up his connection with the young people of the Central Church largely through the influence of Joy Graham, but George Caldwell was genuinely interested in Christian work.

"Good evening, Vivian," said George Caldwell, familiarly, to a robust, rosy-cheeked girl, whom he approached after leaving young Gregory. "How are the folks at home?"

"Glad to see you again, George," replied the girl, heartily, shaking his hand vigorously. "They are all well. I was over at your home on last Saturday. They want you to come out and see them."

"I must go out soon," he responded. "Why didn't you tell me you were going home last week and I would have gone along?"

"Oh, yes," answered the girl, mockingly. "Do you think I am going to run after you asking you to take me home? Not a bit of it," and the girl haughtily tossed her head.

"I'm honest about that," answered the young man, earnestly. "You are always making fun of me."

"Well, now, don't cry about it," she replied, patronizingly, alluding to his serious tone.

"I will take you to the dormitory to-night," he said, eagerly, "but I will have to leave at nine o'clock to see a customer of the bank on some important business. I think I can get through and be back here before the party separates. Our Tourist Club is going to have a great tour through London to-night."

"I won't promise to wait for you if you are not here when the party breaks up," said the girl, "but if you are here I will be glad of your company."

"All right," he answered. "I will be back in good time."

"Who is this fine Englishman that Joy is toting around to-night?" asked the girl.

"Haven't you met him?" inquired George Caldwell.

"No, I just arrived a moment before you saw me."

"Come along, then, and I will introduce you before the program of the evening begins," said the young man, leading the way through the company to the place where Reginald and Joy were standing together.

The girl who had this conversation with George Caldwell was Vivian Derwent, whose home was in the country not far from that of her companion. Like Joy Graham and Roland Gregory these two had also been brought up together. Vivian was attending the Normal School in Bronson and lived at the girl's dormitory.

"Excuse me, Mr. Nelson," said young Caldwell, ad-

dressing the immigrant, "but here is Miss Derwent, one of our young ladies who has just come in. She wanted to meet the lion of the evening."

"There is nothing lion-like about me," replied the Englishman, with a smile, as he greeted the young lady cordially. "I am glad to meet you, Miss Derwent."

"They told me you were an Englishman," said Vivian, with a little courtesy, "and you know we associate the lion with England."

"But you are an American," replied Reginald, in bantering tones, "and yet I would not think of associating you with an eagle. I would associate you with a bird of paradise."

Vivian Derwent blushed at the compliment. "When did you arrive in Bronson?" she asked.

While Reginald was answering George Caldwell and Joy Graham were called to another part of the room, as the program of the evening was about to begin. George was the presiding officer of the Club, and Joy was the hostess for that evening, so that both were soon occupied with other things, and Reginald was left alone with Vivian. They sat down side by side and the program was soon started, somewhat to Reginald's relief, as he wished for a cessation of conversation in order that he might compose his thoughts better for his talk on London.

The program began with a piano solo, during the rendition of which the company subsided into silence and arranged themselves for the evening's entertainment.

After the piano solo Roland Gregory and Joy Gra-

ham made their way to the front of the room, and he began a vocal selection, accompanied by Joy on the piano. Before beginning his song he straightened himself to his full height, looked over the company with a superior air and frowned. Reginald did not expect much, and he was surprised when the song began. Gregory had a rich, deep voice, and the absolute stillness during his singing showed his musical power. At the close of his song the applause was spontaneous. After this came a recitation by a young lady, a characteristic American humorous selection, which the Englishman was enjoying greatly. Suddenly he heard a whisper at his side and turning around saw Joy Graham beside him, with flushed face, holding a violin in her hand.

"Excuse me, Mr. Nelson," she whispered, "but our next number on the program was a violin selection, and the young man who was to play could not be present, as I have just found out. Won't you please play for us the piece you played at the concert on the boat?"

"If it will please you, Miss Graham, I shall be glad to do so," responded Reginald, his heart beating fast as he leaned towards her, whispering in her ear.

"Thank you, thank you, ever so much. This is my own violin," said Joy, handing him the violin and stealing silently away again.

When the humorous recitation was finished Reginald was introduced briefly by George Caldwell, who explained that he had volunteered to fill the absent violinist's place.

As he looked around before touching the strings

with the bow, the immigrant met the scornful glance of Roland Gregory fixed upon him. "Let us hear you play the violin in this company," the glance seemed to say in mockery.

He collected himself together and bent over the instrument. When he began there was a buzz of excitement, but soon all were still and listening with surprise. Softly, gently, the music pervaded the room. The only movement now visible amongst the entire gathering was the movement of the player's arm. The violin seemed like a living thing. It sobbed and moaned, whispered and cajoled, laughed and cried. The pathos which Joy had noted when he played the same selection previously was now deeper, and more appealing.

Joy Graham herself listened spellbound. Tears filled her eyes, and her emotions were strangely stirred. Of all the arts music is the most intimate and the minor key in harmony seems to touch the human soul beyond all else. Again Joy Graham wondered who Reginald was and what tragedy had grieved his soul. The poet's words came to her mind:

"Music, O how faint, how weak
Language fails beneath thy spell;
Why should feeling ever speak
When thou canst breathe her soul so well?"

Softer and more plaintive were the tones as the end of the playing drew near. Still sweeter and more appealing was the music. Like a faint echo, dying far off amongst the distant hills, the melody ceased. There was intense silence for a moment, and not until Reginald began to rise was the spell broken. The applause

of the company was deafening. Had he contributed nothing else to the evening's pleasure except his violin selection his appearance would have been the event of the evening.

A little later he was again presented to the company by George Caldwell, who made a brief speech, telling of Reginald's recent arrival from England, and the pleasure which the Tourist Club had in being honored with the presence of a real Englishman to conduct them through London. Another prolonged round of applause greeted Reginald when he arose to give his talk about England's mightiest city.

He had prepared a rough sketch of the city, which he hung on the wall and explained first of all.

After a brief historical introduction he began his description of modern London, picturing its streets, parks and buildings. Joy noticed at once that he was no novice at public speaking and held the close attention of them all. He described the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and the other chief places of interest to actual tourists when travelling abroad. His description of Marlborough Palace was especially vivid, and his audience realized at once he was portraying what he himself had actually seen as he told of the magnificence of its furnishings and even pictured in detail a royal reception in the Palace.

Before concluding he spoke briefly of the darker side of London's life, telling of the poverty and slums, and of the heroic efforts that England's noblest men were making to uplift these submerged masses.

After introducing Reginald to the company George Caldwell had been obliged to leave, so it fell to the lot of Joy Graham to express the thanks of the Tourist Club to the young immigrant for his part in making the evening such a success. In a rather stammering way she told how much they all appreciated both the violin music and the trip through London, and she welcomed Reginald as a member of the Tourist Club in the future.

"We have found this London guide such good company," she said, with a little laugh, "that we will just take him along with us."

Before the young people separated almost every one of them shook hands with Reginald, and he felt embarrassed at all their words of praise and appreciation. But he noticed that there was one of the party who paid no attention to him. Roland Gregory utterly ignored him. As the young people separated Reginald noticed that Gregory stood near the door beside Joy Graham, so he bade him good-night respectfully but curtly, and then turned to Joy.

"This has surely been an evening of pleasure for me, Miss Graham," he said to her, sincerely. "It was fortunate for me that I crossed in the Neptune and was directed to Bronson."

"We thank you, Mr. Nelson. We have just needed someone like you in our Tourist Club to give our imaginary trips a touch of reality. I thought I was in London to-night."

Just then Vivian Derwent approached, saying with a

little pout on her lips, "Dear me, George has not come back yet, and I am afraid I will have to walk to the dormitory alone."

"Not at all, not at all," said Reginald, gallantly. "I am able to take a hint."

The girl blushed in great confusion and stammered out, "No, no, Mr. Nelson. You know I did not mean that."

"At any rate, he will be your escort home," said Joy.

As Reginald was walking home with Miss Derwent he asked her in regard to Roland Gregory.

"Oh, Roland is getting to be a regular bore," said the girl. "He used to be a fine young man, but he is now manager of that factory where the women have been having a strike, and the airs he puts on are ridiculous."

"He seems to be quite a friend of Miss Graham's," said Reginald, trying to speak in matter-of-fact tones.

"They have been friends all their lives," answered Vivian Derwent, innocently. "They are engaged to be married."

"Engaged to be married!" exclaimed Reginald, in such horror-struck tones of astonishment that his companion started.

"Yes," she replied, turning to look at her escort. "They were engaged just before Joy started for Paris. What's the matter, Mr. Nelson?"

They were just passing under a bright electric light as she spoke, and she noticed a pallor come to the Englishman's face and saw him stagger for a few steps.

With an effort Reginald controlled himself, steadied

his walk, and answered, "I felt dizzy for a moment. Pardon me for frightening you."

"It was so hot in the house to-night, I felt like fainting myself only I was so much interested in your talk on London," replied the girl. "Are you all right again?"

"I am all right now," Reginald answered, in a hollow voice, which sounded strange to himself.

"I wish I could take a trip over the ocean some day," went on Vivian, in a lively tone. "My grandfather came from the north of Ireland when he was a boy, and I have heard him speak often about his life over there."

Reginald Nelson thought that the walk to the dormitory of the Normal School was never going to end. Fortunately, Vivian Derwent kept up a chatter of conversation, doing almost all of the talking. Had he been like himself he would have enjoyed the opportunity to find out in regard to school life in America, but he seemed numb and helpless.

"Good-night, Mr. Nelson. Thank you ever so much for your company," said the girl, when they had reached the end of their journey. "We will look for you at the Tourist Club at every meeting."

"Good-night," answered Reginald, shortly.

He walked home slowly and meditatively. Anyone passing by him would have thought he was enjoying the peaceful quiet of the fall evening, but the world knows little about our real lives. A civil war was raging in the heart of Reginald Nelson all the way from the dormitory to Mr. Cameron's house.

"What a fool I am to care whether Joy Graham is

engaged or not," something within him seemed to say. "I have only known her for two weeks. What's the matter with me? This American atmosphere has taken me off my feet." "My God, Joy Graham engaged. No hope for me at all," another voice seemed to answer in despair. "I never knew until to-night how beautiful she was. I cannot bear to think she belongs to another."

"Reginald Nelson, come to your senses," the first voice responded. "What are you doing? Here you come out to America to do something for your fellow-men. You leave home, friends, prospects behind you. Once in America you begin mooning like a schoolboy after the first pretty face you see. For shame, Reginald Nelson."

But the second voice would not be downed. "Engaged to be married," it wailed.

The world-old conflict was on within the soul of the young Englishman, between his judgment and his heart. He had allowed Joy Graham to acquire a place in his affections such as no girl had ever attained before. The time in his life when he first saw her, the romantic surroundings of their first days of acquaintance, his loneliness in a strange land, as well as that mysterious attraction between people which sometimes springs to life in full power after the briefest friendship, all combined to give the American girl every advantage, although she herself was perfectly ignorant of the havoc she was making with the life-plans of the immigrant.

On the other hand, Reginald Nelson was naturally

thoughtful, self-controlled, masterful. His was a nature fit to be touched with the spirit of modern conditions and glad to surrender himself for humanity's betterment.

"I am miserable," he finally admitted, "but I shall master this weakness. I shall be a friend to Joy Graham, even to Roland Gregory, to all men, but no more of this sentimental folly in the life of Reginald Nelson."

He straightened his shoulders, clenched his fists, and turned into the street on which the Cameron house was located.

But the heart of a man is not so easily conquered and Reginald Nelson never forgot that long night of bitterness.

CHAPTER VII.

PLANNING AN AWAKENING.

"Good morning, Mr. Townley, you are just the man I am looking for."

Allan Rutledge greeted his brother minister in Bronson with these words one Monday morning about two months after the eventful night when Reginald Nelson acted as guide through London at the Tourist Club.

"Delighted to see you," answered Mr. Townley, cordially. "What can I do for you now?"

"I want to have a conference with you this morning about something of importance. Can you come to my home?"

"Come to my study at the church," said Mr. Townley. "You have never yet visited me there."

Allan Rutledge accepted the invitation and the two ministers walked down the street arm in arm in the direction of the People's Church.

"How is our young Englishman getting along?" asked Mr. Townley. "I do not see Mr. Nelson very much. He has become a member of your church, has he not?"

"No," responded Allan. "I do not seem to be able to get him to consent to a public avowal of his faith in Christianity, but he is a regular attendant at the

church and he mingles to a certain extent amongst our young people."

"I have a peculiar interest in the young man," said Mr. Townley. "He came to Bronson at my invitation in the first place, and I feel that there is moral power in him if it could find an outlet."

"He has accepted a new position which he assumes the first of the year," answered the other. "He told me yesterday that he is going into the office of the *Courier* on January first, and he will be the city reporter."

"Good," exclaimed Mr. Townley, enthusiastically. "That is a better place for him than the railroad office. We shall hear from him in the newspaper world, I predict. How did he get the position?"

"Mr. Marchmont noticed the report of his address at the Tourist Club about two months ago, and sent for him to get an interview from him about London and England. You saw that interview in the *Courier*, didn't you?"

"Yes, of course," was the answer. "I was not at all surprised to see the masterly way in which the young immigrant sized up the political situation in England. He is no common immigrant, I tell you."

"Well," continued Allan Rutledge, "that interview showed Mr. Marchmont that there was ability in the young man and he needed a city reporter, so he offered the place to Mr. Nelson."

"I will speak to Mr. Marchmont about him and assure the editor that he has made no mistake."

Having reached the People's Church, Mr. Town-

ley unlocked a side door and ushered his friend into his study. The room was large and well furnished, having beautiful book cases, full of books, a desk and chair, an expensive library table and all the other appurtenances of a well-ordered study.

Allan Rutledge looked around in admiration.

"You have a fine 'den' here, my brother," he exclaimed. "Any one could compose a sermon in such a place as this. The very atmosphere is conducive to reflection."

"Still I am often lonely here," answered the other, with sudden pensiveness. "I seem like a hermit shut up in my cell. When I want a real sermon I have to go out amongst the people who are fighting life's battles. I am coming to the conclusion that when God said 'It is not good for man to be alone' He meant ministers of the Gospel as well as the rest of folks."

"Bravo," responded his companion. "That encourages me to think that you will soon leave the ranks of the benedicts. I was afraid you were a confirmed bachelor. What have you been studying about lately?" concluded Allan Rutledge, taking up a book that lay on the table.

"Since my return from Europe I have been studying the social question with a new enthusiasm," responded Mr. Townley. "I was formerly interested in Biblical criticism, and I learned German so that I might read the authorities in Germany more readily, but my visit to Europe has entirely changed my outlook."

"What do you mean?" asked Allan Rutledge.

"In Europe, to my surprise, I found the leading

thinkers and scholars turning their attention more and more to the matter of social reform. In such matters Europe is far in advance of America. Some of the recent legislation in Germany and England would be called rank socialism with us, but it is the legislation of which they are most proud."

"You mean the laws giving the Governments control of monopolies, and the legislation providing for State insurance, old-age pensions, minimum wage, and such like?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Townley, somewhat astonished. "Are you acquainted with the social progress in Europe?"

"I thought everybody was following these present-day reforms," replied Allan Rutledge. "I have been taking for a number of years an English magazine, *The British Weekly*. It is a journal of social and religious reform and I have been in close touch with the efforts which are being made in the more advanced nations of Europe to Christianize social institutions."

"I did not know you were interested in these things at all," said Mr. Townley, cordially. "I am delighted to know it. Do you know I think that the church must stand still until we can Christianize our social institutions in America? I have been devoting more and more thought to this phase of the work of the church. We have been spending too much time with the individual and overlooking our duty to society."

"There is truth in your statement that we need social reforms in our American life," answered Allan Rutledge, earnestly. "I have studied the subject of sociol-

ogy for years and ever since my college days I have been convinced that our economic world needs to be saved. The church, the school and politics have all been democratized and Christianized in our modern life, but the business world of modern times is neither democratized nor Christianized."

"Those are exactly my beliefs," replied Mr. Townley, enthusiastically. "I have just been reading in regard to that investigation at Bethlehem."

"Bethlehem?" echoed Allan Rutledge.

"Oh, not Bethlehem of Judea," responded the other gravely. "No, no. I mean Bethlehem in Pennsylvania where the great steel industry has a plant."

"I had not yet noticed in regard to that," said Allan.

"The report showed the darker side of our prosperous country," responded Albert Townley, arising and getting a pamphlet from which he read:

"Here are the facts about the strike at South Bethlehem. Nine thousand men are employed in the immense plant making steel for a wealthy corporation which is paying 40 per cent. dividends. These enormous profits are, in part, possible because more than half of these workers toil twelve hours a day, most of these working seven day in the week. Over 30 per cent. of these men earn less than \$1.68 for this long day of labor. Three men protested to the management against the Sunday labor. They were at once discharged and this caused the strike. The wage scale makes the herding of men together the only method of living possible for them. Under such conditions

decency is impossible to say nothing of Christianity.' "

"A report like that," continued Mr. Townley, "gives rise to serious thought in regard to social justice and our modern economic system."

"My blood boils hottest," responded Allan Rutledge, "when I learn of the exploitation of women and children by modern industry."

"That is just what we have, on a small scale, here in Bronson," responded Mr. Townley, quickly. "I feel there is no regeneration possible for Bronson until we have some social readjustments."

"You remember you diagnosed the spiritual condition of Bronson for me a few days after I arrived here," said Allan Rutledge, changing the subject.

"I remember our conversation very well," said the other; "have you found my diagnosis correct?"

"Your diagnosis, according to my investigations, was absolutely correct," said Allan Rutledge, with determination. "I am now ready to apply the remedy and I propose to begin a campaign which will result in Bronson's regeneration."

Albert Townley stared at his companion.

"We do not need to await any social readjustments," continued the minister. "These readjustments depend on spiritual regeneration and are impossible without it. We leaders of Christian activities in our churches must learn once more to put first things first. Do you not remember an old saying, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you?' The church has well-nigh forgotten those words of its Founder."

"What is your plan of regeneration?" asked Mr. Townley.

"Bronson needs new men more than it needs anything else," responded Allan, with decision. "When we get new men a new society is possible. Otherwise an impractical dream. We need an old-fashioned revival of real religion."

Albert Townley was silent and dropped his head on his hands.

"The first thing for us to do is to unite our Protestant churches in a genuine religious campaign. If you can get the other churches in Bronson to co-operate with the People's Church and the Central Church I will guarantee a regeneration."

Albert Townley was still silent.

"Do you think you can gain the co-operation of the other Protestant churches?" asked Allan Rutledge, finally.

"Explain your plan further," said Mr. Townley, with a perplexed look. "If we do succeed in getting our Bronson Protestantism united, what do you then propose?"

"Here is what I propose," said Allan Rutledge, rising to his feet and towering to his full height. "We will build a tabernacle capable of seating 10,000 people. We will not build this tabernacle on the top of any mount, but right down in the valley amongst the common people. Then we shall have a strong capable leader take charge of the situation for five or six weeks, holding meetings in the great tabernacle night after night, and covering the city with cottage prayer

meetings, shop meetings, street meetings, saloon meetings, and every form of Christian activity of a spiritual nature. At the end of the campaign there will be a new atmosphere in Bronson."

The very boldness of the minister's tactics appealed to Mr. Townley, but he was still unconvinced.

"Who would you get as leader of such a campaign? Will you undertake it yourself?"

"I have the leader in mind, a personal friend of mine, who was born in Iowa not far from my own birthplace. If we can get our Protestant churches united on such a campaign this leader will march us to victory."

"Whom do you mean?" asked the other.

"The Rev. William A. Sunday, better known as 'Billy' Sunday."

Albert Townley jumped to his feet.

"It will never do, Rutledge. I have read of some of this man's campaigns and of their success, but it is absurd to think of bringing him to Bronson. This is a peculiar community. Do you think Messrs. Graham and Marchmount would endorse such a movement?"

"Listen to me, my brother," began Allan Rutledge, in earnest tones. "In planning out this campaign I never thought for a moment whether Graham or Marchmount or any one else would endorse it except God Almighty. If we are to be successful leaders in religious work our faith in God must return. Did you not assert yourself in your diagnosis that the very fact that such men as Marchmount and Graham, men with-

out vital religion, controlled the religious organizations of Bronson, was the most damning fact in our church life? What I propose to do in this tabernacle campaign is to free the church life of Bronson from the deadly grip of these very men and place the control back in the hands of the Christian people. We must democratize and Christianize our churches once more if we expect to reform our social life in Bronson."

After a few moments of further conference, Albert Townley began to think that the Iowa minister's plan of campaign might not be so wild and visionary as it first appeared to him.

"Perhaps such a union effort on the part of our Bronson Protestantism might result in good," he said, finally, to Allan Rutledge, "but do you think that this man, Sunday, is the best leader we can get?"

"You know something about Billy Sunday, I expect," said Allan, questioningly.

"I have never met him personally," said the other, "but I have often heard him condemned by ministers and others."

"Did you ever hear a minister who had been with him through a campaign, condemn him?" asked Allan.

"No," said Mr. Townley, hesitatingly. "I do not think I did, but they say his methods and language are vulgar in the extreme."

"I have known Mr. Sunday since he was one of our national baseball stars," said Allan Rutledge, seating himself, and turning to his companion. "I was only a boy then, but I remember how proud we were of our

Iowa baseball champion. After his conversion I lost sight of him for some years, but when he entered the religious field I hailed him as a winner for I knew that he had exactly what our age needs. He has courage, determination, manhood and dynamic energy. Only in the past few years has he come to himself and I predict a still wider field of usefulness for him. He is fitted in every way to reach the average American community like Bronson. His so-called vulgarity is only the vernacular of the baseball diamond, and it is the every-day language of millions of Americans. He does not need to use this language but he humbles himself to it in order to reach the masses and save them. His astounding success is proof of his divine commission. The devil is not fighting against himself to-day any more than he was in the days of Christ's flesh."

After a good deal of argument and persuasion Albert Townley finally agreed to visit the other ministers in Bronson, with whom he had a large influence, and seek to unite Bronson Protestantism in a Billy Sunday campaign. Mr. Townley was surprised to find that almost unanimously the other ministers agreed that such a campaign would be supported by them.

"One thing sure," said one of the ministers, "Billy Sunday will not be able to make Bronson worse spiritually. Religion seems like a dead issue in this place as far as I can see, except in the hearts of a faithful few here and there."

The result was that a meeting of the ministers and some of the most spiritual men in the different churches was called to discuss the matter further. The Central

Church was represented at this meeting by Mr. Cameron. Mr. Cameron had heard Billy Sunday on one occasion during a western visit he had made a year before, and he was enthusiastic in favor of Allan Rutledge's plan.

"It will be just as Dr. Rutledge says," he exclaimed at the conference. "If we arrange for a big tabernacle and invite Billy Sunday to Bronson we will shake this town from center to circumference, and we need such a shaking. Conditions are fast becoming intolerable, if I know anything about religion and morality."

Other laymen spoke in the same strain, and the conference showed that the feeling amongst the business men was entirely favorable.

"There are a number of our business men, who are not members of any church, who will support this enterprise heartily," Mr. Cameron assured them.

It was planned to present the matter to the different churches the following Sabbath and complete the arrangements at once if the congregations would agree.

The next Sabbath was a cold, disagreeable day and only the more earnest of the church members were in attendance at the churches. The proposed union of the Protestant forces in a spiritual campaign appealed to the individual churches of all denominations and the ministers were astonished and pleased to find out the amount of real religious interest which had been latent in their congregations.

Allan Rutledge made a visit to a neighboring State, where Mr. Sunday was conducting a campaign, and

prevailed upon him to arrange for a meeting in Bronson early in the New Year.

"We need you in Bronson, Billy," said Allan Rutledge, with intense earnestness, "and God needs you."

"All right," was the ex-baseball champion's characteristic remark, "Go ahead and get up the tabernacle. I'm ready to buck the gang in Bronson or anywhere else. I have never back-pedalled for the devil yet and I never will."

The proposed campaign was completely arranged for before any reference was made to it in the newspapers of Bronson. The public announcement at first attracted little attention, but as time went on and the preparations for the building of the immense tabernacle were begun there were signs of anxiety amongst certain of Bronson's citizens.

"Is this grafter, Billy Sunday, coming to Bronson?" said Bud McCrea to Mr. Graham one day in the law office of Millman and Graham. Bud McCrea was the uncrowned king of Bronson. He was the boss who controlled the politics of the community as really as any feudal baron did in former times in his domain. Any privilege that was desired had to have the approval of Bud McCrea as every political aspirant well knew. The man seemed to feel a sense of injured dignity that it was proposed to inaugurate a spiritual campaign without first obtaining his consent.

"Is this grafter, Billy Sunday, coming to Bronson?"

There was a scowl on his face and a tone of irritation in his voice as he spoke.

Mr. Graham looked at the boss and smiled.

"Don't be afraid, Bud," he replied, jokingly. "Billy Sunday is nothing but a clown and his circus performances here will not amount to anything. Let him alone."

"I don't know about that," said the other, seriously. "I have reports from some places where he has been and he is a dangerous man. After his campaigns cities begin to 'clean up' as they call it, and we want none of that kind of Sunday-school business in Bronson."

"Well," responded the lawyer, "I must confess I knew nothing about it until it had all been practically arranged. Our new man at the Central Church seems to be at the head of the movement."

"I never liked that fellow, Rutledge," said McCrea. "He is one of those confounded preachers who think they ought to be interfering with everybody's business. I hear he has slandered the fair name of Bronson already."

"He did preach a strong temperance sermon lately, I understand," said the lawyer, "and spoke somewhat severely about our saloon regulations, but he will soon get tired of that kind of thing. These new men need to be given a little liberty, you know."

"Is it too late to put a stop to this 'Sunday campaign,' as they call it?" asked McCrea with impatience.

"It is all arranged for," replied the other. "I don't see what can be done now to stop it. The churches and ministers seem to be enthusiastic about it."

"I'll see the council and try to head the thing off,"

said McCrea, as he arose to go. "The visit of such a grafter as Billy Sunday to Bronson is a disgrace."

Bud McCrea emphasized his scorn for the ex-baseball champion by adding an oath to his words as he left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SLEIGH-RIDE PARTY

The day after his triumph at the Tourist Club was one of inner conflict and discouragement for Reginald Nelson. He was himself astonished at the place which Joy Graham had taken in his life and he wondered what the subtle charm was which seemed to bind his life to hers. Try as he might he could not dismiss her from his thoughts.

"She belongs to another man," he said to himself, sternly. "I have no more right to see her hand than if she were already married. Ah," he continued, groaning, "what is wrong with me? Am I going mad?"

His fellow clerks at the office noticed his dejected appearance, but could not guess the cause. They thought he must have received bad news of some kind and they did not trouble him. He attended to the duties of the office, acting as secretary to the agent, and entering way bills on the books, but his mind was not on his work.

At first he thought he would drop all connection with the Central Church and give up both the choir and Tourist Club in order that he might not be compelled to meet Joy Graham, but a strange fascination drew

him to the scenes where he knew he must suffer anguish of heart.

"I promised Dr. Rutledge that I would sing in the choir," he said to himself, decidedly. "I will prove myself a man by attending both choir practices and the meetings of the Tourist Club. I shall make a friend of Vivian Derwent and Joy Graham will never know the torture that she has caused me."

Accordingly, during the next few weeks Reginald and Joy met again and again, but he studiously avoided her as much as he could. The girl at once noticed his change of attitude towards her; his constraint in her presence; and the efforts he took, often ill-concealed, to avoid her.

Joy Graham was greatly grieved at his conduct. She imagined that in some way she had offended him, and she sought to be more friendly than ever.

"Why are you always smiling on that Englishman?" asked Roland Gregory one evening at the close of a meeting of the Tourist Club, as he was escorting Joy to her home. There was a tone of irritation in his voice.

"I did not know I had been smiling on him so very much," answered the girl innocently, "but I was just now thinking what has gone wrong with him the past few weeks. He is not at all as cheerful as he was at first. I am sure he must be homesick."

"Vivian will soon take the homesickness out of him," said the other sneeringly. "He is dancing attendance on her night and day, and poor George Caldwell is

distracted. He wishes you had never asked the fellow to our club."

"How rudely you talk, Ronald," responded the girl, with a sudden catch in her breath. "I did not know he was dancing attendance on Vivian or any one else."

"They are all talking about it," said her companion. "He escorts her to the dormitory on every possible occasion. I think myself he is making a fool out of Vivian."

Joy Graham changed the subject, wondering why she was so annoyed at hearing of the immigrant's attention to Vivian Derwent.

Long after midnight that evening she was lying awake, carrying on a conversation with herself.

"No wonder he admires Vivian," she said to herself. "She is such a bright, cheerful girl, and he needs just such companionship as hers, but I some way cannot understand why he avoids me as he does."

She recalled to mind their first experiences on the boat in mid-Atlantic and she remembered how strangely happy she was in his company from the very first.

"I will ask him some time," she finally concluded, "what is the reason he has changed so much in his attitude to his old boat companion."

She smiled in the darkness as she remembered some of his former remarks to her when they were fellow travellers on the ocean.

However, although that first meeting of the Tourist Club which Reginald attended had brought him sad knowledge and intense suffering, it also changed his whole after life in the business world in a remarkable

way, and gave him a place in Bronson which he had coveted from the first. Thomas Marchmount, the editor of the Bronson Courier, noticed in the "copy" of his city reporter an account of the address of Reginald. The account had been written up for the reporter by Joy Graham, and she spoke at some length of Reginald's arrival in Bronson, and of his splendid address on London and the Londoners before the Tourist Club.

"This is the young fellow that Mr. Graham spoke to me about," commented the editor, as he read the item. "I must have an interview with him. He will probably be able to give me a good account of the situation in England, and I know that many of my readers would appreciate a good article on that subject just now."

Accordingly, Mr. Marchmount wrote a note to the young Englishman asking him to call at the Courier office that evening. Reginald responded with pleasure and met Mr. Marchmount for the first time.

"I am much pleased to meet you," said the editor, greeting his visitor with much cordiality. "Mr. Graham has been telling me about you. I understand you have recently come to Bronson from England."

"I crossed in the same boat with Mr. Graham's family and with Mr. Townley," responded Reginald, "and they advised me to begin life in Bronson, and I do not think I have made a mistake."

"Right you are, my boy," said the other, kindly, looking with interest at the handsome youth. "You made no mistake in locating in this city. Do you like your work at the railroad office?"

"Quite well, but I am not going to remain a railroad man."

"What are your plans for the future?" asked Mr. Marchmount.

"I wish to enter the newspaper world at the first opportunity," replied Reginald, promptly. "I think I will be able to succeed best in your own profession."

"Have you ever tried the newspaper work?" inquired the other.

"Just a little," Reginald answered, smilingly. "I did some amateur work for a London paper."

"By the way," said the editor, "I wish you to give me an interview on the political and social condition of England at present. Would you be prepared to do that?"

"Certainly; I will gladly give you the interview right now."

Mr. Marchmount began asking Reginald a number of questions in regard to different aspects of English life, with which he seemed to be somewhat familiar, and also inquiring about distinguished Englishmen. The editor was surprised at the readiness with which Reginald answered his questions and the full information which he was able to furnish.

"What do the English people think of the Welsh statesman, Lloyd George?" Mr. Marchmount asked during the interview.

Reginald answered at once in a tone of enthusiasm: "He is the great hero of the common people of England at this hour. They hail him as the Garibaldi of England. His popularity and influence are growing

every year, and he is proving himself the great modern statesman of Europe."

"But he is often bitterly criticised by a portion of the English press," interjected Mr. Marchmount.

"The aristocracy fear and hate the man," responded Reginald, with a gleam in his eyes. "No man knows better than I do how bitter is their hatred. They feel that they are in his power and that he is stripping them of their ancient monopolies and privileges, and they fail to understand that he is really saving England from revolution and destruction."

At the conclusion of the interview Mr. Marchmount said abruptly, "Would you be in a position to accept a place on the *Courier* staff at the first of the year?"

"I certainly would," answered Reginald, enthusiastically. "I am engaged at the railroad office for no definite time, and a few weeks' notice will be sufficient in case I desire to leave."

"I will need a city reporter at the beginning of the New Year," said Mr. Marchmount, and I think you are just the young man I want."

Reginald went home overjoyed. For a little while he forgot his disappointment in regard to Joy Graham, and his spirits rose once more.

"Congratulate me, Mrs. Cameron," he exclaimed, entering the Cameron home. "I have accepted a place on the *Courier* and I begin my newspaper work the first of the year."

Mr. and Mrs. Cameron were delighted at the news, for they had already begun to look on the immigrant more as a son than as a lodger.

"I don't think you liked the work at the railroad office," said Mrs. Cameron. "I have noticed how discouraged you were all day to-day."

The weeks passed rapidly. The first snow fell in Bronson that year on Thanksgiving Day at the end of November. The biting cold of a Michigan winter was a new experience to the Englishman, but the warm blood of youth made the arctic weather delightful to Reginald.

About the middle of December Vivian Derwent called at the freight office to see him. She and Reginald were now warm friends, and he felt a freedom in her company which gave him relief during those days of struggle as he was trying to kill out of his heart his devotion to Joy Graham.

After the greetings were over Vivian began enthusiastically, "Oh, Mr. Nelson, a number of the members of the Tourist Club are going on a real trip to-morrow night. My father and mother want me to bring out a sleigh load to our home, and we will have a supper there. Can you come?"

"A sleigh-ride?" said Reginald, perplexed. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, I forgot you never had a sleigh-ride before," said the girl, laughing. "We get a big hay rack and put a lot of hay in it, and then fill it up with robes and furs, and we pile in and have the jolliest time. You will come, won't you?"

"It is six miles out to your home, isn't it?" said the other.

"Yes, that's the worst of it. I wish it were twelve."

"I don't think I would care to ride more than six miles in a hay rack with the weather as cold as it is now."

"You won't mind the cold. I will get a fur coat for you, and we will have a lot of robes. Roland and Joy are coming and nearly all the members of the Tourist Club."

"I will surely be glad to go," said Reginald. "I have been wanting to visit your home and meet your father and mother."

"And they are just dying to see you," said the girl. "I have been telling them about my Englishman."

The next evening a gay party left Bronson in a large hay rack on a sleigh-ride to Vivian Derwent's country home. It was a rare winter night, with a clear moon shining in silvery splendor, and the twinkling stars glowing like patines of pure gold in the azure vault of heaven. A blanket of snowy whiteness covered the entire landscape, the dark patches of woods variegating the scene. On the road the snow was packed by the constant travel of the sleighs driving to and from town, and the four horses drawing the loaded hay rack trotted along merrily, their sleigh-bells jingling joyously. In seating themselves it had happened that Vivian and Reginald sat opposite Roland and Joy, Reginald being next the driver. "What a glorious night for our ride!" said Joy, looking up at the radiant moon.

"You're moonstruck," responded Vivian, irreverently.

"We have no such joys as sleigh-rides like this in

England," said Reginald. "I never knew before what the joy of winter was."

"We have everything that's good in Michigan, don't we, Joy?" said Roland Gregory.

"Wait till we get home," interposed Vivian Derwent, "and you will all have something good, I tell you. Mama is going to give us real oyster soup just like mother used to make.

Just then a shrill whistle sounded through the night air, and the company was silent. In the distance could be heard the thunder of the limited express from New York to Chicago, which rushed through this part of southern Michigan on its western journey. For several miles at the point where the sleighing party was jingling along the wagon road paralleled the rails, and Reginald noticed that the driver took a fresh grip on the lines with which he controlled his double team when he heard the engine's warning whistle.

"Are the horses afraid?" asked Reginald, addressing the driver.

"Three of them are all right, but that front off horse is a little panicky when the cars pass close to her," said the driver. "On a night like this any horse feels good, and they will likely pull hard on the bits when the train passes us."

"There it comes," shouted Vivian, as the gleaming electric headlight swung around a curve a mile or so behind them.

"Look, Mr. Nelson, look," exclaimed Joy Graham, excitedly. "Does not that make a great sight?"

Reginald had been watching the horses closely, anx-

ious to assist the driver, if possible, in case assistance were necessary, but at Joy's exclamation he turned to see the oncoming train.

Roaring like Niagara, the electric headlight blinding them with its gleams, the great mogul engine, with its long train of Pullmans, was just behind them as Reginald turned. The brilliantly lighted coaches, full of passengers, rolled swiftly past.

"Whoa! Whoa!" the driver of the hay rack was shouting in excited tones to his startled teams. The "panicky" horse was thoroughly frightened, and the others were dashing along the road at breakneck speed.

"Whoa! Whoa!"

The only words heard were the cries of the driver. The whole company sat still, looking forward at the plunging horses, while beyond the red lights at the rear of the limited express were fading from view.

The four horses were now running at full speed along the highway. As far as the eye could see the road stretched, straight and broad, but the driver knew there was a sharp curve a couple of miles ahead where the road crossed the railroad track, and he struggled to regain his control.

Reginald Nelson arose to his feet and climbed up on the driver's seat. The vehicle swayed from side to side, and the girls were getting frightened.

"Give me the reins to the front team," said Reginald, getting a firm hold with his feet on the footboard of the driver's seat. He reached over and grasped the lines controlling the two front horses, leaving the driver free to manage the second team.

The frightened horses seemed to know that a strong hand had taken the reins as soon as Reginald grasped them. "Steady!" he shouted, pulling stronger and stronger on the heavy leather lines. "We'll soon quiet them now," he said to the driver, as the horses slackened a little in their mad pace. Half a mile farther on the two men were able to bring the teams to a full stop, and Reginald climbed down to his place under the robes beside Vivian Derwent.

"Where did you learn to drive wild horses?" asked Joy Graham, drawing a long breath.

"That was jolly," responded the Englishman. "It makes me think of my boyhood days."

The company became gayer than ever. All thought of their recent fright was banished, and they sang together merry songs.

"There's our home," suddenly exclaimed Vivian, pointing to a large farmhouse on a hill to the left. In a few moments they drove merrily into the yard.

"Welcome, my young friends," said a stout farmer, well muffled and gloved, who met them with a lantern in his hand. "Where are you, Vivian?"

"Here, father," said the girl, leaping from the side of the hay rack, and running up to him. "We had the jolliest sleigh-ride."

Vivian introduced the visitors to her father, who then took charge of the horses, and the girl led the way to the house. Mrs. Derwent and Vivian's younger sisters and brothers were awaiting them, and they were soon seated in the warm, roomy parlor of the farmhouse.

In a few moments they were summoned to the dining room, and entertained with the hot oyster soup, of which Vivian had boasted. Every one was in high humor, and gladness and mirth reigned supreme. Vivian assisted her mother in serving the guests. George Caldwell, whose partner was a classmate of Vivian's at the Normal School, was telling of the frightened horses and their mad race after the limited express.

"Mr. Nelson, I thought sure you would fall over when you were climbing on that seat with the horses running as they were."

"It was nothing," answered Reginald. "I looked for the horses to get excited, and I had figured out beforehand how I would give the driver a little assistance."

Just then Reginald looked across the table to where Roland Gregory and Joy Graham sat side by side. The girl's eyes met his, and he imagined he could see a strange pain in them, a hunger which thrilled him, a longing which enraptured him.

"We are all glad to know of your new position on the Courier staff," she said, quietly. "You are to be city reporter, are you not?"

As she was speaking Reginald was saying to himself, "I wonder if she really cares for me."

"Yes," he answered, absent-mindedly.

"Don't you think that will be a splendid position for Mr. Nelson?" continued the girl, turning to her partner, Roland Gregory, with a smile.

Reginald turned his head away in his disappoint-

ment. "Fool," he muttered to himself. "Fool, to dream of one who is already pledged."

"When do the Sunday meetings begin?"

Reginald awoke out of his brown study to hear Joy Graham asking him this question. The subject interested him, and he answered at once, "On the first of February. I am going to Illinois early in January to visit the town where he is now conducting a campaign. I will write a special account of his work there for the *Courier*."

"How interesting," responded Joy. "I expect you will also be busy reporting his meetings when he is in Bronson?"

"We are going to devote whole pages every day to his campaign," said Reginald. "Mr. Marchmont believes in Billy Sunday."

"I think it is a mistake to bring that fellow to a town like Bronson," interposed Roland Gregory. "He is all right amongst ignorant Westerners, but in a cultured city like Bronson his meetings are an insult."

Neither Reginald nor Joy made any response to this assault on the ex-baseball champion in his rôle as evangelist, but after a moment's silence Reginald said quietly, "Dr. Rutledge is responsible for bringing Mr. Sunday to Bronson."

"It is not to Rutledge's credit," said Roland Gregory, with a frown.

"Now, now, Roland, wait until you hear Mr. Sunday yourself before you condemn him." Joy Graham spoke the words playfully, and the conversation changed to other channels.

After the oyster supper the company entertained themselves for an hour or more singing and playing games. During the evening Reginald took advantage of a little lull to make his way into the kitchen, where he found Vivian's father sitting reading a newspaper.

"Don't you want to come and join the young folks in their games?" asked Reginald.

"No, my boy," answered the farmer, laying down his newspaper. "I am getting too old for those capers, but I like to see those youngsters have a good time. 'Pears to me, Mr. Nelson, my Vivian said you were from England."

"Yes, I am proud to claim England as my birthplace, and I think it is an honor to be born in the second-best country under the sun."

"Right you are, my boy," replied Mr. Derwent, jovially. "My own father came from the North of Ireland when he was a boy. He settled in old Vermont, and I grew up there, but I was lucky enough to come west when I was a young man."

"Vermont is a famous New England State," said Reginald. "I have often heard of the Vermont people."

"They are a fine kind of Yankees," responded the other, "and I love old Vermont. I am going back on a visit in a year or two. Did you ever hear of two Vermont farmers who met one day and one said to the other, short-like: 'Bill, what did you give your horse last winter when he had the episeudics?' 'Turpentine,' answered Bill. That was all was said that day. A

week later they met and they greeted each other again: 'Say, Bill, what did you say you gave your horse last winter when it had the episeudics?' 'Turpentine,' said the other. 'So did I, Bill, but mine died.' 'Mine died, too,' said the other, and they parted.

Both Reginald and Mr. Derwent laughed at this tale of the Vermont farmer, and the two men soon got on familiar terms. Their conversation was suddenly interrupted by Vivian rushing into the kitchen and addressing them, "What are you two folks doing out here. Come into the parlor. We want you to play the violin for us, Mr. Nelson."

"No, no," he answered, "I can't play to-night, but I will sing a song if the company want it."

Entering the parlor, Reginald sang a new popular air which he had picked up on the boat during his passage, entitled, "I Love a Lassie."

It was intensely popular with the company, and an encore was called for.

Then Reginald turned to Joy Graham and asked her to play for him the music of her own song, "A Little Bit of Love." He sang the piece to the gay young people with a pathos and feeling which made Joy Graham understand that although Reginald mingled with the laughing throng his heart was too much in sympathy with humanity in its stern struggles to enter wholly into life's frivolities.

As they left the farmhouse for their return trip to Bronson, Mr. Derwent shook Reginald's hand heartily and asked him to come out and see him again and Reginald promised that he would.

Just before getting into the hay-rack Reginald and Joy happened to find themselves standing together apart from the rest. The girl turned to him and said earnestly, "Mr. Nelson, I hope I have not offended you at any time, have I?"

"Not at all, Miss Joy," he answered, quickly. "Why do you ask?"

"Because you do not treat me as you used to do when we were fellow passengers on the Neptune."

Just then they began climbing into the hay-rick and in the noise and confusion Joy did not hear Reginald's reply. He thought she had heard it and more than once he said bitterly to himself, "I wish I had not told her, I wish I had not told her. I am an idiot."

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE COURIER OFFICE.

"Good morning, Mr. Nelson. I am glad to see you arrive at your desk so promptly each day. There is some tragedy in the north part of town reported this morning. I wish you would investigate at once."

Thomas Marchmount spoke these words one day to Reginald Nelson about a week after he had begun his work on the staff of the Courier. The new city reporter had already developed the Athenian characteristic, so essential to a newspaper man, of grasping at anything that looked like "news" and in a few moments he was on the street car bound for the north part of the city. It needed little enquiry for him to find the home where the tragedy had happened as the entire neighborhood was alive with the excitement of the occurrence.

"Shure, an it's too bad, entoirely," an Irish woman explained, when Reginald approached the first group he came to, and asked what had happened. A number of women were standing on the sidewalk, with all kinds of wraps around them to protect them from the cold, discussing the sad news.

"What is it that has happened?" asked Reginald. "I am the city reporter for the Courier and I wish to get the news?"

In the minds of the humble denizens of that part of the city a newspaper man was a person of importance, and the Irish woman made a courtesy to the young reporter, and answered: "An' haven't you heard it yet? Shure and it's poor Mae, the purty girl; she's dead.

"Dead?" responded Reginald. "How did she die?"

"Ach," responded the other, pulling her shawl up around her head and shivering in the wind, "there was some rascal back o' it, but loike as not they'll never catch him. Her poor mither is heart-broke."

The women began to separate, their curiosity and sympathy in the case being mastered by the wintry blasts of a January morning. Reginald went to the door of the cottage and knocked. At first there was no response, and the young man looked around as he waited. The cottage in which the tragedy, whatever it might be, had taken place was one of three cottages built side by side, each exactly a copy of the other. The houses in that neighborhood were occupied almost entirely by the workers in the large factories near by, and were all small and cheaply built. After waiting a few moments Reginald knocked louder and a woman about middle age, with eyes red from weeping came to the door.

"I represent the Courier," said the reporter, stepping inside, and speaking in a low tone of voice. "I have called to get the details of the death of the girl."

Low as he spoke a woman sitting near a small stove in the room overheard him. Her face was the picture of despair; she was wringing her hands; tears were silently coursing down her cheeks.

"Oh, my God, my God, will the world know the shame of my poor Mae?" she shrieked, as she heard the newspaper man make his enquiry. "Oh, Mae, why did you do it? Why did you do it?"

Two or three other women who were in the house came to the side of the distracted woman and sought to soothe her. The woman who had admitted Reginald stood hesitatingly, not knowing whether to ask him to leave or not. The young Englishman was greatly moved at the woman's agony and stepped at once to her side, saying, "I beg your pardon for intruding on your grief. I assure you it is with no wish to aggravate your distress, but your friends and neighbors will want to know just what has happened and so I have come here to find out the truth."

He spoke in a kind, sympathetic voice, seating himself on a vacant chair beside the stricken woman and looking at her sadly. She covered her face with her hands and wept hysterically for a few moments. Then she became calmer.

"How old was your daughter?" Reginald asked, after a pause.

The woman made an effort to control herself as she answered: "Twenty-one, just twenty-one on her last birthday."

"Tell me how it happened." Reginald took out his note-book and pencil as he asked the question and

looked enquiringly at the mother. To the astonishment of the others who were present, Reginald's presence and his questions seemed to give relief to the woman. She began to tell her story in a shaking voice, but her tones became firmer as she proceeded.

"Mae went to work yesterday just as usual," she began, wiping her eyes with her apron. "She looked as well as she ever did, and I thought to myself as she went out of the door that there wasn't a nicer or prettier girl in Bronson than my Mae." Here the mother's voice weakened somewhat, but she braced herself and continued: "When she came home in the evening it was later than usual and I asked her what kept her so late."

"Where did she work?" asked Reginald.

"At the Gregory factory."

There was a pause and then the woman proceeded:

"She told me she had a bad headache and that she would not take any supper, and soon after she went to bed. In a little while I heard her groaning, and I came into her room and she was lying in bed in great pain. I asked her what was wrong and she said, in such a frightened way: 'I took a pill for my headache, mother, and I just feel awful.' I called the doctor at once and he came in a little while and said she was poisoned."

"What doctor did you call?" enquired Reginald.

"Dr. Gracely," answered the other. "He did everything he could, but all he could do was to give her opiates to quiet her pain. She suffered terribly. She didn't think she was going to die at all at first and kept saying she would soon feel better, but as the night went

on she got worse, and then she saw how sick she was she tried to tell me something, but it was too late. I couldn't understand her. Poor child, poor child!"

The mother broke down utterly as she repeated these words, and Reginald decided to leave. Just then the door opened, and several men entered.

"Come in, Dr. Gracely," said one of the women to the first man who entered.

"This is the coroner's jury," said the doctor, in a gentle tone of voice, pointing to his companions. "They wish to examine the body."

Going to a little side room, one of the women led the way to the side of the bed on which the body lay. Reverently the white sheet was lifted from the face. Reginald had followed the others to the door and he looked at the beautiful features of the dead girl with absorbing interest. Slight traces of the suffering caused by the poison remained, but so fair and quiet was her repose that she looked as if only asleep.

"You will make a thorough examination, of course, Dr. Gracely," said one of the men, turning to the doctor.

"We will do that this morning, sir," replied the doctor.

"We will meet after dinner, then," said the other, turning to leave the room.

Before returning to the Courier office Reginald visited the Gregory factory to learn what he could regarding the girl. When he called at the office he found that Roland Gregory had not yet arrived at the factory, but he received permission to interrogate some

of the girls who worked alongside of the unfortunate Mae.

The girls at the factory had evidently heard of the tragedy and they were much moved at the sudden death of their fellow worker. At the factory Reginald learned additional details. The full name of the girl was Mae Mobray. She and her mother had come from a small neighboring town to Bronson about two years before, and the girl had worked since that time in the Gregory factory. She had not complained to the other girls on the previous day and the news of the tragedy had shocked them all.

In the afternoon Reginald attended the inquest. Dr. Gracely made a full report of the examination. Death had been caused by poison, evidently self-administered.

"There was a sad reason for the rash act of the girl," said the doctor. "Her condition proves that some of the charges recently made in regard to abuses in factories employing women and girls are true. If only the death of Mae Mobray could arouse public sentiment to the absolute necessity of public control of such industries the poor girl has not died in vain."

The words of Dr. Gracely made a profound impression on Reginald Nelson, and in his account of the tragedy in the *Courier* he quoted the words of the doctor, writing up the story in such a vivid manner that for a number of days the tragedy was the chief topic of conversation.

Unable to forget the desolate home of the widowed and childless Mrs. Mobray, Reginald also called the attention of Allan Rutledge to the sad case, and the

minister promptly arranged to provide for the helpless woman until a permanent home for her could be found.

The week following Reginald departed for the Illinois town where Billy Sunday was closing a campaign. The young Englishman was delighted with this assignment as he was anxious to meet the baseball champion, of whom Allan Rutledge had told him much, and he also was pleased to travel farther West in the New World.

He spent a day in Chicago on the way, and marvelled to see that mighty city which in less than forty years had arisen from its ashes, a veritable Phoenix.

Arriving at his destination in the evening he made his way to the immense tabernacle where the far-famed evangelist was proclaiming his gospel. He found the huge building crowded to the doors, and an immense audience listening breathlessly to the words of the ex-champion. At the close of the sermon a large number of men and women went forward to acknowledge publicly their resolution to henceforth lead Christian lives.

The next morning Reginald interviewed Mr. Sunday personally. As soon as the evangelist knew that Reginald was the city reporter of the Bronson Courier, he gave the young Englishman a most hearty reception.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Nelson," he exclaimed. "How is my friend, Rutledge, getting along in Bronson?"

Reginald explained in what high regard the Iowa minister was held and told of the purpose of his own visit.

"I suppose the Bronson devil is getting a little

nervous," said Mr. Sunday, with a laugh. "He generally gets stirred up when he hears I am hiking his way."

Reginald assured the evangelist that ample preparations were being made and that he could depend on a welcome to the Michigan city.

"Our paper, *The Courier*, is planning to give you full space every day while you are in Bronson," continued Reginald.

"The power of the press to-day is a marvel," replied Mr. Sunday, speaking earnestly. "The newspapers are helping me save men right along. I cannot be too thankful for the support they have given me."

"You are a paying proposition for the newspapers," responded Reginald, smilingly.

"You bet," answered the other, promptly. "You can look for hundreds of new subscribers to the *Courier* as soon as I get to Bronson. I tell you, Mr. Nelson, it pays a newspaper as well as a man to serve Jesus Christ."

During the day Reginald interviewed prominent citizens of the place in regard to the Sunday campaign. From the mayor of the city down to the constable he found the verdict practically unanimous in the evangelist's favor. Many of them had been suspicious at first, but the results of the meetings proved their value.

"The only people who are complaining now," said a leading dry goods merchant, "are the saloon men and the theatres. The saloons are losing thousands of dollars every week, but their loss is the people's gain."

On his return to Bronson Reginald wrote an account

of his visit to Illinois, describing the Sunday tabernacle, the great crowds, and the views of leading citizens in regard to the evangelist and his campaign.

"Mr. Sunday will arrive in Bronson in two weeks and will begin the purging of our city," was the closing sentence.

The day following the publication of Reginald's visit to the West, Joy Graham was walking along the main street of Bronson when she met him face to face."

"I have been wanting to see you," she exclaimed, extending her hand to him as they met. "I want to congratulate you on that account of your interview with Mr. Sunday in Illinois. I saw Dr. Rutledge to-day, and he is very highly pleased with your description of his friend and his work."

Reginald Nelson blushed and stammered. He had not talked alone with the girl since the evening of the sleigh-ride when he had told her in a few brief, burning words why his attitude towards her had changed. She did not hear what he said, but he imagined she had heard it all, and he wondered at her unaffected manner toward him, and the genuine pleasure that gleamed in her dark eyes as she greeted him.

They had met at a corner and she pointed across the street and asked if he was going that way.

"Yes," he said, stammeringly.

"I don't think you know where you are going," she responded, smiling at him. His resolution to keep at a distance from her vanished into thin air. He forgot he had ever made any such resolution. He simply knew that Joy Graham, smiling and beautiful, was at his side,

and he walked along with her talking and laughing just as he did on the days of their first acquaintance on board the Neptune.

"Your visit to Mr. Sunday has done you a lot of good," she said, shyly, after they had walked together for a few blocks.

"I feel sure that Mr. Sunday's visit to Bronson will do this city good," he answered, not understanding just what she meant.

"I have no doubt of that," she replied, "but I referred to your own attitude towards me. You have not been a bit cordial to me for a long time."

Her words brought a twinge of conscience to Reginald, but he gave himself up to the happiness of the moment and answered, "You must excuse a rude Englishman. You know we have been called a nation of rude boors."

"I never heard of it," she responded, "and I want to brand such an accusation as a base slander."

The two young people laughed gaily. Reginald was feeling happier than he had been since the fatal night when he attended his first meeting of the Tourist Club, when suddenly they were confronted by Roland Gregory. Gregory frowned darkly when he saw the young pair, and evidently enjoying each other's society, and his scowl became darker as he noticed the animation on the face of his fiancé.

Glancing up just before they met, Reginald saw the scowl, and in a moment his own conscience was awake. He felt ashamed, humiliated, disgraced. His long battle with his heart had been lost. Joy Graham belonged

to another, and yet he had been acting towards her as though she were heart-free.

Roland Gregory stopped in front of them, and Reginald broke away almost without a word. Joy looked after him in astonishment, wondering why he had rushed away so abruptly.

"Joy, I really must forbid you keeping company with that fellow. I don't like him, and you ought not to encourage him as you do."

Roland Gregory's voice was harsh as he spoke. The girl turned to him in surprise. "What's the matter now, Roland?"

"You are my promised wife, Joy, and I think you ought to pay attention to my wishes. You know I don't like to see you with that English fellow."

"I think I can choose my own company," replied Joy, somewhat nettled by his manner and speech.

"Now, Joy, dear," said the other, "don't let us quarrel. We never had any words before, and we must not let anything come between us. About this Nelson fellow, I have good reason to believe he is a married man and that he abandoned a wife in England. That is why your name must not be associated with his."

This speech sank deeply into Joy's heart. She was assured that Roland Gregory would never make any such assertion unless he had some proof, and Reginald's actions had at times been somewhat mystifying to her. She was silent, and walked along by his side with drooping head.

"Can you come for a sleigh-ride in my new cutter

this afternoon?" Roland asked, a little later, as they were about to separate.

"Yes," answered Joy, somewhat absent-mindedly.

"All right," replied the other, waving his hat in farewell. "I will drive around for you about three o'clock."

The flattering account of Mr. Sunday's evangelism, which appeared in the *Courier*, and especially the statements that the saloons lost money every week that he conducted services in the Illinois town, aroused to action the evangelist's enemies. By clever manipulation Bud McCrea cajoled the city council into passing an ordinance prohibiting the use of all vulgar and obscene language in public addresses in Bronson, the ordinance being meant especially for Mr. Sunday, whose pulpit mannerisms and language were now the subject of debate in almost every Bronson home. The *Courier* with black-leaded type called attention to this ordinance, and held it up to scorn. This action on the part of Marchmount's paper aroused Bud McCrea to fury. He called at the *Courier* office the next day in high dudgeon.

"What did you mean by ridiculing our councilmen when they are attempting to keep vulgarity and obscenity out of our city?" he demanded of the editor. For answer Thomas Marchmount turned and looked at his visitor. The two men stared at each other for a moment, and then Thomas Marchmount burst out laughing. McCrea's anger increased, and his face flushed scarlet. Still the editor laughed.

"I tell you this is no laughing matter. If we turn

against you the *Courier* will soon see its finish." Bud McCrea snapped out this threat snarlingly. The editor stopped laughing and began to control himself.

"Excuse me, Bud, but it is so ridiculous to hear you talking about fostering culture and morality in Bronson that I just had to laugh."

"Your paper is doing all it can to give that man, Sunday, every advantage when he gets here. He won't do the town any good."

"Let us wait, McCrea, and see. I admit he won't do the gamblers and saloon-men any good, and I know you think a good deal of that crowd, but there are a few other people in Bronson besides them."

"You want to be practical, Marchmount," replied the other, drawing his chair a little closer. "I am afraid that fellow, Rutledge, has gotten you off the track. You have been getting along very smoothly for a long time here, and if things are all stirred up it will mean trouble for you and all of us."

"I think Dr. Rutledge is getting me on the right track," answered the editor, with warmth. "We have been too negligent in Bronson. We are too slack to-day. What has been done about the murder of that poor girl, Mae Mobray? Not a thing. My young friend from England, who is now our city reporter, has been doing a little investigating and he is appalled at some of the social conditions in Bronson. We need a purging here, and Billy Sunday is the man to do the purging."

Bud McCrea was silent at this unexpected outburst from the hitherto compliant editor. He sat still for a

few moments, and then arose and buttoned his coat.

"Mark my words, Marchmount," he said, as he turned to leave the office, "if you begin to fight us we will ruin you. That is all there is to it. We won't have any foolishness about it."

"I am not afraid of you, McCrea," replied the editor, arising to his feet. "I give you fair warning that the columns of the *Courier* will be devoted henceforth to the real good of our community."

That evening Mr. Marchmount related to Reginald his conversation with Bud McCrea, and told his city reporter to interview the leading merchants and business men of the city in regard to their feelings towards the Sunday campaign. The result of this canvass was surprising even to the most enthusiastic Sunday supporters. Almost to a man the business men endorsed the project, and many of them gave signed statements in regard to their attitude. Innocently entering the saloons also, Reginald inquired of them what they thought of the coming evangelistic effort, and with complete unanimity the saloon-keepers denounced the enterprise as a blot on the fair name of Bronson.

The results of the investigation were published in the *Courier*, special emphasis being placed on the fact that every saloon-keeper was an enemy of the baseball gospel.

The bold attitude of the *Courier* on other moral questions at this time was also much commented on by the public and the circulation of the paper began to increase, especially amongst the masses of the working people.

At the end of his first month as a city reporter Mr. Marchmount called Reginald into his private office and remarked, drily, "You are making good, Mr. Nelson. For your extra work during the Sunday campaign I will allow you a fifty per cent. increase in salary, and the increase will be permanent."

Reginald stammered his thanks.

"No thanks are necessary," said the editor. "You are more than earning the increase. You have brought new life to our paper, and hereafter the *Courier* will be found on the side of the people every time."

CHAPTER X.

BEFORE THE BATTLE.

"I tell you, Dr. Rutledge, I have become somewhat dubious about this Sunday campaign. I am much afraid the results will not be what you expect in Bronson."

"Why do you think so?" asked the Iowa minister, speaking earnestly.

Mr. Townley and Allan Rutledge were sitting together in the comfortable study of the People's Church. It was the day before the expected arrival of Mr. Sunday and his company of assistants and the two ministers were conversing on the subject of the coming battle between the forces of right and the forces of wrong. Allan Rutledge had been expressing himself enthusiastically about the impending struggle and the certain victory of the right when Mr. Townley unexpectedly interposed his doubting comment.

"My recent studies in the social sciences," responded Mr. Townley, in a serious tone of voice, have been convincing me that our churches have been altogether on the wrong track. We have been seeking the individual only. Mr. Sunday represents the old type of evangelism which lays stress on the individual. What we need is the new evangelism which sees clearly that the individual is exactly what society makes him. We

must seek to regenerate society instead of wasting our time with individuals."

Allan Rutledge looked closely at his companion and remained silent.

"Take Bronson as an example of what I mean," continued Mr. Townley. "There are numbers of young men and women who are led astray in Bronson every year, but these young people are not so much to blame. Society is to blame for allowing these gambling dens, houses of vice, and saloons to exist. Let Mr. Sunday turn his attention to society and seek to redeem us socially and I will back him up with my full strength, for I know he is a man of power."

"Mr. Townley, I want to have a plain talk with you on this subject. I have felt that you were not altogether in sympathy with our campaign and that you suffered it to go forward more to please me than because it appealed to your conscience and judgment. Let us talk frankly together. Unless you are prepared to back Mr. Sunday in his effort for Christ and righteousness in Bronson our forces are divided right at the start."

"But I shall certainly not oppose him, and I wish his campaign all the success possible," said Mr. Townley quickly.

"I understand," answered the other, "but you remember the words of Christ Himself, 'He that is not with Me is against Me.' It will be utterly impossible for you to be neutral during Mr. Sunday's meetings in Bronson."

Mr. Townley looked at his fellow-minister questioningly.

"Now, sir," continued Allan Rutledge, arising to his feet, "you say that society is to blame for the wreckage of a large number of young lives in Bronson the past year?"

"That is the actual fact," said Mr. Townley, confidently.

"Well, then," responded the pastor of the Central Church, "you will surely admit that you are a part of society, are you not?"

"Certainly."

"The wreckage of these young lives then lies at your door. I would be ashamed to be a minister of Jesus Christ, sir, and admit that I had wilfully destroyed some souls for whom Christ died."

Allan Rutledge spoke with a fierce earnestness, looking sternly at the younger man.

"But," stammered the other, astonished at the turn which the conversation had taken, "I am not to blame. It was not with my wish or consent that society has permitted these death-dealing institutions to exist."

"No apologies, sir," continued Allan Rutledge, his eyes flashing with indignation which seemed so real that the other was almost alarmed. "No apologies. You are a part of society and you admit society is the guilty criminal. The whole includes the part and you are equally guilty with the wretched men and women who manage these vile institutions in our community."

"I object, Dr. Rutledge," interposed Mr. Townley, angered at the fiery, denunciatory tone of the minister.

"Why do you object?" exclaimed Allan Rutledge. "Have you not admitted your own guilt. You are a self-confessed criminal. Society connives at these houses of death and you are a part of society. You think as society does, you speak as society does, you act as society does, and you are guilty, sir, of murder, yes, of the murder of souls."

"No, sir," shouted Mr. Townley, also arising to his feet. "I never admitted that I thought as society does or spoke as society does. You well know, Dr. Rutledge, that if the people of Bronson thought as I did they would banish to-morrow for all time every saloon, gambling den and house of ill-fame from our city."

"Now you are talking sensibly, Mr. Townley," said Dr. Rutledge, seating himself calmly and turning a smiling face on his friend. "I wished you to separate yourself from 'society' and acknowledge your independence. Do you not see that if Mr. Sunday can succeed in regenerating a majority of the people of Bronson so that they look at these things as you and I do then social regeneration is possible, but unless the individuals are first reached and transformed it is only absurd nonsense to talk of regenerating society. We need a new social life in Bronson, but before we can talk of social regeneration we must have new men in our community, born again by the power of the Spirit of God."

Mr. Townley's face began to lose its puzzled expression.

"I confess your bitter words a moment ago alarmed me," said he, somewhat sheepishly.

"I have heard so much foolish talk such as you were

indulging in that I am losing patience with these absurd would-be reformers of society who wilfully forget that 'the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul,' " said Allan Rutledge, earnestly. "Since the majority rules we do not need to regenerate all the individuals in Bronson, but only a working majority, and then I promise you I shall begin a campaign for the social redemption of this place."

"I have noticed that Thomas Marchmount is making the *Courier* a real factor for progress," said Albert Townley, a little later. "Did you read his article in yesterday's paper entitled, 'Give "Billy" Sunday a hearing'?"

"I surely did," responded his companion, "and I want to tell you that Mr. Marchmount's change of attitude is due in part to the fact that he came over to some of the evangelistic meetings I have been holding lately every Sabbath evening."

Albert Townley looked at his fellow-minister in surprise at this speech.

"I tell you it is true," said the other laughingly. "You know I have a special friend in the *Courier* office. Reginald Nelson told me that Mr. Marchmount was deeply stirred by a sermon of mine on the text, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' By the way, when we begin our work of redeeming the social life of Bronson we shall need to depend greatly on the *Courier*. I am praying that both Mr. Marchmount and his young city reporter will be converted through and through during the Sunday meetings, and I think they will."

"Reginald Nelson seems to me to be pretty much of a Christian already," replied the other.

"But he has never confessed Christ," answered Allan, "and the non-Christians of Bronson are already hiding behind him as they do behind every good man who refuses to align himself with the Christian forces."

"I thought I was going to have that young immigrant in my church," said Albert Townley, regretfully. "You know I discovered him and directed him to Bronson, but you soon captured him."

"I plead 'not guilty,'" said Allan Rutledge. "It was our young people who captured Reginald. You know he met Joy Graham on the boat."

"Of course I know that. I introduced them myself."

"If Roland Gregory had not been the first on the field I rather think that something interesting would have come out of that introduction," said Allan Rutledge. At least, my wife, who thinks that Mr. Nelson is the finest young fellow she has met in Michigan, was telling me that she believed the two young folks were mated in heaven, but things have gotten mixed on earth, for Roland Gregory and Miss Graham are engaged, and an announcement has already been made of their wedding in the Fall. Mrs. Rutledge happened to speak of the engagement to Reginald one day lately, and she could tell from his embarrassment that he had become an admirer of the girl."

"I was sorry to hear of that engagement," answered Mr. Townley, shaking his head. "I am afraid Gregory is not much of a man."

"I must confess a dislike to him myself," said the

other. "He is opposing this Sunday campaign with all his might and is seeking to get Mr. Graham to do all in his power against the meetings. I expect to see Mr. Graham and his daughter this afternoon and take them to the Tabernacle. I have some hopes of Mr. Graham's conversion, but he is hardened in his self-righteousness."

"Talking about the responsibility of society," Dr. Rutledge said a little later, as he arose to leave, "do you know there is in reality no such thing as 'social responsibility' as far as society is concerned? You may think such a statement is strange, but the more you reflect on it the more you will recognize the truth of it. The individual has a social as well as an individual responsibility, but there is no social responsibility apart from the individual. Society, like any corporation, has no soul, and only souls can feel responsibility of any kind. Think that over and it may help you to see the weakness of many sociological dreamers of our day."

On the afternoon of the same day Allan Rutledge met by appointment with Mr. Graham and his daughter, and he accompanied them to the great Tabernacle which had been erected for the Sunday campaign.

The tabernacle was located in the northwest part of the city on a large vacant stretch of land. It was somewhat out of the way, and Mr. Graham remarked as he approached it, "I am afraid, Dr. Rutledge, that you have made a mistake in the location of the tabernacle. It will be utterly impossible to draw the people out here."

"But we could not get ground enough any nearer," replied the minister.

"It would have been better to have built a much smaller building and had it full than to have this monster tabernacle half empty."

"It will be full from the first night, and will be kept full during the entire five or six weeks of the meetings," responded Dr. Rutledge, with enthusiasm. "I know Mr. Sunday's record too well to be disappointed."

"But Bronson people are different. They would not come out as far as this no matter who is here."

"Do not the circus people camp here when they visit Bronson?" asked the other.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Graham, smiling, "but Mr. Sunday is no circus."

"He attracts the crowds better than the circus," answered Dr. Rutledge. "There is nothing that attracts men, Mr. Graham, like the religion of Jesus Christ, and Mr. Sunday presents it in a way that appeals to the average American citizen, especially the working people."

They had entered the tabernacle and were surveying its immense proportions. As Mr. Graham looked around and saw the endless tiers of seats his scepticism increased.

"See our choir loft," said the minister. "We will have one thousand singers seated there every night, won't we, Joy?" He turned to the young lady as he spoke. Miss Graham had been silent while her father and the minister discussed the outcome of the great effort.

"We will," the girl exclaimed in a joyful tone of voice. "It will be a beautiful sight to-morrow night to see this great building all lit up with lights, filled with the people of Bronson, and with the singers massed behind the evangelist. I can see them listening to the old, old story, and I know that this tabernacle means a new Bronson by and by."

"A vision of Joy," said her father, mockingly.

"It is a vision of what is to be," said Dr. Rutledge, confidently. "I trust, Mr. Graham, you will be able to attend these services regularly."

"I am afraid I cannot promise to be a constant worshipper in this tabernacle," said Mr. Graham. "The fact of the matter is, Dr. Rutledge, I will be glad when this business is over with and the community has returned to its regular mode of Sunday services. I fear the influence of Mr. Sunday will be demoralizing, especially on the young."

"Our young people in Bronson are already demoralized," replied the minister, in a severe tone. "If Mr. Sunday makes them worse I will believe you can spoil a bad egg."

"You are rather unfair to our city," responded the lawyer, with dignity.

"I am speaking of the average young man in the city," answered the other, quickly. "I am thankful for the company of earnest Christian young people which we have in association with Central Church, but you must know, Mr. Graham, that the vast majority of the young men in Bronson take no serious interest in religion."

The three visitors stepped up on the rostrum. Allan Rutledge paused for a moment in front of the little stand from which the famous ex-champoin of the baseball diamond was to deliver his messages of salvation to the people of Bronson.

"I liked very much the article which Mr. Marchmont wrote in the *Courier* of yesterday," said Dr. Rutledge, taking a newspaper from his pocket and opening it. "Have you read it, Mr. Graham?"

"No," answered the lawyer, shortly.

"Let me read you a part of it," continued the minister, and he began to read the following editorial:

"GIVE 'BILLY' SUNDAY A HEARING.

"Mr. Sunday, popularly known as 'Billy' Sunday, will arrive in our city the day after to-morrow. He can do his own preaching without any help from the *Courier*. The record of the conversions at his meetings are so numerous, so real, and so remarkable as to be astounding to his detractors. As the evangelist expressed it himself, 'He has seen more men hit the sawdust trail' than any living man, and no evangelist in America is in such demand as is Rev. William A. Sunday. His records of victories in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, as well in his native Iowa, and on the Pacific slope surpass anything seen in this country since the early ministry of Dwight L. Moody and the revivals in the days of Charles G. Finney. We are inclined to believe that Mr. Sunday has not been humbugging the American people for a score of years since he left the baseball diamond to preach the Gospel. At any rate, it

will be a privilege for our community to hear this remarkable man, and we are assured that our people will give 'Billy' Sunday a hearing and will not pass judgment on him until they have heard his message and observed the results of his unconventional methods of preaching."

Mr. Graham and his daughter stood a little distance away as Allan Rutledge read the editorial. When he had finished Joy Graham clapped her hands in approval. A few workmen, who were finishing the wiring of the building for electric lights, also joined in the applause, but the lawyer frowned and turned away.

"It will be difficult to win a man like Mr. Graham," said Allan Rutledge to himself, sadly, as he saw the manner in which the lawyer received the open-minded editorial of Mr. Marchmount.

Had the minister followed the lawyer after he left the tabernacle he would have had still less confidence in the ability of Mr. Sunday, or any other evangelist, to reach Mr. Graham. Going directly to his office, the lawyer found Bud McCrea awaiting him with some impatience.

"Where have you been, Graham," said McCrea, peevishly. "I have been waiting here a whole hour for you."

"I expected to be back before this," replied the lawyer, "but my daughter, Joy, persuaded me to accompany Dr. Rutledge out to the Sunday Tabernacle this afternoon, and I have just returned."

"I want to see you about this ——— Sunday campaign, as these preachers call this Sunday graft busi-

ness," responded the other with an oath. "It seems that the council ordinance is a failure. Marchmount's jibes at it have made it useless. Can't you see Marchmount and convince him that he is making a mistake by letting these preachers lead him around as they are doing?"

Mr. Graham looked grave as he answered, "I have noticed that Marchmount's paper is getting somewhat sensational of late. He is playing to the mob. I think that his new city reporter is, in part, to blame."

"You mean that English chap?" inquired McCrea. The lawyer nodded.

"That fellow is the worst proposition that ever struck our town," said McCrea, waxing indignant. "He interviewed me, along with the rest, about the Sunday meetings, and he had the nerve to print everything that I said. He came to see me yesterday again, inquiring about the relation of the city administration towards 'the haunts of vice,' as he called them. I sent him about his business pretty quick, but the idiot went and told again exactly what I said to him. He is making me ridiculous before the community."

"Did you see Marchmount about it," asked Mr. Graham.

"Sure, I did," answered the other, vehemently. "I went to him the first thing, but he just laughed at me. He said he was letting the city reporter look after those things and he guessed it was all right."

The lawyer looked perplexed. "I am afraid Marchmount will give us trouble if he begins to take the public into his confidence like that. This Sunday excitement

is going to stir things up badly, but the tempest will soon blow over. That is the record of such things always."

Just then the door opened and Roland Gregory stepped into the room. The two men greeted him cordially. After a few minutes of conversation, Mr. Gregory began a story of a grievance which he also had against the *Courier*:

"That impudent young Englishman, whom Marchmount has turned loose on this community, was at the factory this morning, inquiring about conditions of the operatives, the average wage of the employees, and a lot of other impertinent questions. I soon told him to go about his business, but he acted as though he owned my office and said that the conditions in my factory were of public interest and that he represented the public. He told me he would report exactly the treatment I had given him in the paper. I found out that at the noon time he interviewed a number of the girls and women, and I expect he will give us a write-up to-morrow. Can't we stop this interference with private business?"

Roland Gregory's anger increased as he rehearsed the story of his wrongs to his prospective father-in-law, and he spoke the last sentence in a loud tone.

"I tell you, Graham, we must do something to that *Courier* or it will ruin Bronson," chimed in McCrea, as the lawyer sat silent after Gregory's outburst.

"I will see Marchmount about it," said the lawyer, finally, "but I am afraid we can't influence him much until after this Sunday business is over. At any rate,

the paper will be fully occupied with the tabernacle meetings for the next few weeks, and I don't think there will be much interest in anything else while the clown, Sunday, is in Bronson."

"But after these meetings are over," responded McCrea, ruefully, "I am afraid things will be worse than ever. It will finally end up with the preachers running this town if we are not careful."

The face of Bud McCrea, as he pictured such a fate for the city of Bronson, was pathetic. In his estimation a city without saloons, gambling and vice was a city which was tottering to financial and commercial ruin.

CHAPTER XI.

REGENERATING A CITY.

The day that William A. Sunday, the much-heralded evangelist, arrived in Bronson was one of suppressed excitement. The interest of all classes in the ex-baseball champion was remarkable. He was the subject of conversation in the luxurious parlors of the rich and in the humble cabins of the day workers around the factories. In places of business, law offices, saloons, resorts of all kinds, the one topic of interest was "Billy" Sunday.

The evangelist arrived from Chicago on a morning train and was at once taken to a large furnished house which had been set apart for him and his family during his stay in the city. He was accompanied by his wife and his younger children. In addition to his immediate family, he had a number of assistants in his company, including an experienced janitor for the tabernacle, a gifted chorus leader, a pianist, a soloist, a Bible teacher, shop workers and others.

"This looks like business," said Allan Rutledge to himself, as he met the party at the train and was introduced to the large band of gossellers. The building of the immense tabernacle, the discussion of the value of Mr. Sunday's work in a community, the newspaper

advertising which was given to the enterprise, and, above all, the bitter opposition of the enemies of Mr. Sunday assisted in centering the attention of the entire city on the evangelist from the time of his entrance into Bronson.

In the evening, long before the time announced for the beginning of the first service, the roads leading in the direction of the tabernacle were black with people. It was a cold, snowy night, and many feared that it would be impossible to heat properly the vast structure, but they came anyway, clad in furs and heavy overcoats, willing to endure the cold rather than miss the first service of the meetings.

The experienced janitor, who was in Mr. Sunday's employ, had taken immediate charge of the tabernacle on his arrival, and had supervised the heating and ventilation, and when the crowds began to fill the building they found it warm and comfortable as a church. The floor of the tabernacle was covered with sawdust, which made a clean and warm kind of carpet. "The sawdust trail," which soon became a common expression in Bronson, referred to the sawdust aisles down which the penitents passed in going forward to confess their faith.

The chorus leader had already assumed the command and the vast choir of upwards of one thousand voices was singing enthusiastically, leading the great audience of ten thousand people, in the well-known and ever popular hymn, "Rescue the Perishing," when Mr. Sunday himself appeared.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the Tempter,
Feelings lie buried which grace can restore;
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more."

As the multiplied thousands sang the familiar words they seemed to throb with a new meaning, and the billows of sacred song reverberated in mighty volume through the tabernacle and far out over the city. Reginald Nelson was sitting at the press table on the platform, gazing out over the sea of eager, upturned faces, while this verse was being sung when his eye caught the figure of the evangelist coming in at a side door. He strode up the aisle towards the platform, unbuttoning his overcoat as he walked. Ascending a short stairway, he pulled off his overcoat, threw it on a chair, and walked to the centre of the rostrum where the pulpit stand had been placed. He was the instant focus for twenty-two thousand eyes as he stood there, leaning against the stand. Although past forty years of age he looked still younger, and his figure seemed small and slight against the background of the thousand-voiced choir. But Reginald had noticed the confident air with which he ascended the platform, and the athletic pose of the man as he stood facing the audience. He could see the strong, determined face, the swift glance of the flashing eye, and the physical vigor which in former days had made him the fleetest base-runner in all America.

"Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died."

The words of the closing verse of Fannie J. Crosby's world-famed hymn rang out louder than the previous verses, the audience and choir seeming to welcome the evangelist with their song and desiring him to know how hearty was their greeting.

The music ceased and an intense stillness pervaded the tabernacle. Waiting a moment until the hush became deeper, Mr. Sunday said: "My friend, Dr. Allan Rutledge, will lead us in prayer."

The great audience bowed reverently and the Iowa minister arose from the group of ministers seated at one side of the platform, and walked to the side of the evangelist.

"Let us pray," he said simply, and then began the opening invocation.

"O God, Maker of heaven and earth, our Father, we come to thee to-night with grateful hearts for Thou hast heard the prayers of Thy people in Bronson and Thou are preparing to open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing which will bring joy to our city."

There were literally thousands present that evening to whom sacred worship was something strange, but all listened to the prayer of the pastor of the Central Church, and thousands added their silent "Amen" to his earnest petitions for God's help in the mighty conflict which was to be waged in the following weeks in Bronson.

"Bless the evangelist," prayed the minister. "We thank you for his life and ministry; his consecration and his service. Empower him mightily for this campaign, and may Bronson's new day begin here and now

as Thy people surrender themselves to Thee to do Thy will."

After the prayer, another hymn was announced and the chorus leader again took charge. The singers were assisted by two pianos, an organ, and a large orchestra, and as the strains of a glad, triumphant song arose from the audience, Reginald Nelson was reminded of the words of an ancient singer who had delighted in sacred song. He was taken back again in thought to old England, and he could hear a mother's voice reading to him out of the Old Book, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing."

An offering was taken to defray the expenses of erecting the tabernacle and heating and lighting it, the evangelist declaring that these offerings would be taken up for a week or two until all the money needed for the expenses of the campaign were raised.

"Remember this it not a taber-nickel," he exclaimed. "Make the offering a good one as we want to get these collections out of the way as soon as possible."

Announcements were made of the various prayer meetings morning by morning, and of the plans for shop meetings and other special gatherings from time to time.

Then the evangelist began his opening sermon. It was brief, pointed, practical, and altogether informal.

"We'll just get acquainted to-night," he declared, with the smile on his face which soon became familiar to his auditors. "I am here to help you. I want to do my part in building up God's Kingdom on Earth, and if

God can build His Kingdom better with me in my coffin, I won't kick. Let God's Kingdom come, no matter what the consequences may be.

"We will make a good deal of singing in this campaign," he continued. "There is great virtue in song. Great revivals never come without song. Song is the ennobling element that contributes to successful religious awakenings. Song and revivals are inseparable. I don't mean the kind that takes the diaphragm exercises to produce," here illustrating in a vivid way the gyrations that singers of classical and high class music usually go through. There was considerable laughter amongst the audience.

"That's right," commented Mr. Sunday. "You don't need to be afraid of laughing in my meetings. There is no command of God, 'Thou shalt not laugh,' but some people think they are not religious unless their faces are as long as a horse's face."

The audience was getting on friendly terms with the speaker and he continued in a more earnest tone:

"We need a revival of the old-time religion in Bronson, and I am going to preach the old Gospel. I am an old-fashioned preacher, of the old-fashioned Gospel that has warmed this old world for years, the Gospel of Calvary, of salvation and of atonement."

Joy Graham seated in an elevated seat in the choir was watching the eagerness with which Reginald Nelson was reporting the sermon. She glanced out over the audience and noticed with joy the rapt attention of the crowd. She could see that the face of her minister

was glowing with enthusiasm, as he sat with a side face to the choir, facing the speaker.

George Caldwell was also in the choir and his interest in the evangelist was intense. He had never seen Mr. Sunday before and had heard much both in praise and blame, but his confidence in the success of the campaign grew stronger as the evangelist proceeded with his opening address.

"We need to begin these meetings right," exclaimed the speaker. "If you want a revival of religion to come to Bronson you just take a piece of chalk and draw a circle around yourself and ask the Lord to begin inside that circle."

Here Mr. Sunday showed how to do it, using a genuine piece of chalk and making a ring with it in the Brussel's carpet which covered the platform.

"Think of the drunkenness, the misery, the lust, the gambling and the sin in Bronson," he shouted. "Think of the harlotry, the vice, the want and the squalor; think of the mountains of guilt in this city. They will not move easily. You've got to pray. This is a cause to demand human laborers, and I say it reverently, if God can't get human agents to do His work it will go undone."

He also chided inconsistent church members with their failures to live the right kind of lives before the world.

"The bad sermons people preach with their lives," he proclaimed, "overrate the influence of good sermons from the pulpit. You pray one day and cheat somebody in a horse-trade the next day. I can tell more

about your religion by trading horses with you on Thursday than by hearing you yell 'Amen' in the prayer meeting on Wednesday night."

There were a number of the eager listeners who nodded their heads at this saying and 'Billy' noticed it at once.

"That's right," he declared, "you know I am telling you the truth. I have come to Bronson to speak the truth and I will speak it. You have a gang here, I know, for there is a gang in every town, but I am not afraid of them. I never back-pedaled for any gang yet and I never will."

This emphatic statement was greeted with applause, and George Caldwell just happened to glance out into the audience and saw Bud McCrea sitting near a side door not far from the front. The dark scowl on McCrea's face as he heard the evangelist bid defiance to the gang was plainly visible.

The speaker walked up and down the platform as he continued:

"I knew a man down in Illinois who used to yell 'Amen' at the prayer meetings and paid his washer-woman fifty cents for doing the washing. One day he invited her to dinner and then the miserable old scallawag docked her twenty-five cents for the dinner when it came to pay for the washing. A little later during a revival meeting the old skinflint scoundrel had the nerve to go up to the woman and ask her to be a Christian.

" 'You go to the devil,' was the reply she gave him, and I don't wonder at it."

Reginald Nelson listened with growing interest to the kind of Gospel which Mr. Sunday had come to proclaim in Bronson and as he heard this story he said to himself: "If he keeps on in that way 'Billy' will get me into the ranks before he is through."

"Listen to me, men and women," cried the evangelist, as he drew his sermon to a close. "You cannot serve God and Mammon. A lot of you church members try to prove God a liar right there. You go to the theatre on Tuesday night, go to the prayer meeting on Wednesday night, to a dance Thursday night, and to a card party on Friday night, and then on Sunday morning you go to church and occupy a space seventeen inches square."

The end of the sermon was abrupt.

"I have a lot of things to say to you people the next five or six weeks," he declared. "I will have some tobasco sauce for some of you, and hot, cayenne pepper for others, but I have good fodder as well, and by the help of God we'll save some souls in Bronson."

He pulled out his watch and exclaimed, "Why, its twenty minutes after nine. That's enough for to-night. Good-night."

He walked from the stand over to the chair where his overcoat was and began to put it on. The people still sat motionless. He looked out over the audience, saying, "What are you waiting for? The benediction? There will be no benediction to-night. The meeting's over."

He bundled himself into his overcoat and made for a side door.

The great throng stirred themselves and arose slowly. With few exceptions all were somewhat surprised at the kind of sermon the evangelist had given, but the impression he made on the vast majority of his hearers was good.

"Billy's all right," said one old man to a neighbor as they walked along the sawdust aisle.

"You bet he is," was the prompt response. This greeting and answer could be heard all over the crowd.

At the close of the meeting Allan Rutledge met George Caldwell for a moment.

"What did you think of Mr. Sunday," asked the minister.

"He is just the leader we needed in Bronson," responded the young man, earnestly. "I am sorry neither Mr. Graham nor Roland Gregory were out to-night. I think if they knew the good that Mr. Sunday can do us they would not be so bitter against him."

Allan Rutledge shook his head sadly. "I am afraid their prejudice will keep them from even listening to Mr. Sunday. It is too bad."

Allan Rutledge also spoke to Reginald Nelson as the city reporter of the *Courier* was gathering up his notes.

"Did you get a good report of the meeting to-night?" asked Dr. Rutledge.

"Watch for to-morrow's *Courier*," answered Reginald, with enthusiasm. "This series of meetings will be the making of our paper. Our city subscriptions have increased by the hundred since we announced our purpose to devote a large amount of space to the

Sunday meetings and we have had large numbers of new subscribers from all parts of the country. Mr. Sunday is quite an American institution, I can see."

Just then Vivian Derwent and Joy Graham were passing down from the choir loft.

"Good, evening, young ladies," said the minister. "I hope you will be able to be present a good deal during these meetings as we will need our singers every night."

"I shall not miss a single evening if I can help it," answered Joy, promptly.

"Nor I, either," said Vivian Derwent. "I think Mr. Sunday is such a fine man."

"You have not heard him yet," replied Allan Rutledge. "Wait until he is here for a week, and then you will hear him at his best. He always begins a little mildly."

"If he was mild to-night," remarked Vivian. "I wonder what it will be like when he is at his best. He seemed to me to be quite plain this evening."

"He will speak still more plainly," assured the minister.

The girls were passing out when Dr. Rutledge asked, "Have you girls an escort?"

"No," responded Joy. "We do not need an escort. I will walk to the dormitory with Vivian, and then I can go home alone."

"I saw George Caldwell here a moment ago," he said, looking around.

George Caldwell had disappeared in the crowd, and the minister turned to Reginald, saying, "Mr. Nelson,

I wish you would see that these girls get home safely. It is getting somewhat late."

With mingled feelings of pleasure and pain the city reporter of the *Courier* joined the girls and they walked together from the tabernacle.

They went first to the dormitory and then Reginald and Joy walked to her home together.

As they walked along they passed a place which was very slippery, having been used by the children during the day as a slide. Joy Graham's feet slipped as she stepped on the icy surface and she almost fell, but she grasped Reginald's arm in time to save herself. A thrill of happiness vibrated in his soul as he felt her grasp and as he reached out his arm to steady her.

"Excuse me for my carelessness," he said, apologetically. "I am neglecting my duty as escort."

"I hope you do not think it a disagreeable duty," responded the girl. "I would not have been afraid at all to have gone home alone."

"No, no," answered the other, quickly. "It is a privilege, Miss Graham, a real privilege for me to assist you in any way I possibly can. I am ready to do anything."

"I wish then you would try to influence my father to attend Mr. Sunday's meetings," said the girl, earnestly. "I am so anxious to have him go. Mama was not out to-night as she has a bad cold, but she will be able to begin attending next Sunday, and I am in hopes papa will go with her every night."

"I am afraid I have not much influence with Mr.

Graham," said the young man. "Cannot Mr. Gregory influence him?"

Reginald never knew why he said this, for he well knew Roland Gregory's opposition to the Sunday meetings. He did not know, however, that Gregory had asked Joy not to sing in the choir during the meetings and she had flatly refused to humor him, declaring that she felt it a religious duty to assist and that he had no right to interfere with her religion.

"Oh, dear," sighed Joy, in response to Reginald's reference to her betrothed, "I am more anxious about poor Roland than I am about papa. Roland talks awfully about Mr. Sunday and says it is a shame for people to listen to his vulgar talk. I did not think him vulgar to-night, did you, Mr. Nelson?"

"I should say not," replied the other, thinking rather vengefully of the contempt which Roland Gregory had shown him a few days before when he called to investigate the conditions at the Gregory factory.

"I will try to get Roland to accompany me to-morrow night," said Joy, innocently. "I will promise to sit in the audience with him if he attends."

"Such an offer would make me attend a meeting anywhere and at any time," said Reginald, recklessly.

"Ah, you flatter!" answered the girl, laughingly. Yet Reginald in some way knew that the speech pleased her, and he walked by her side happy and contented.

At the door of the Graham home Reginald bade the girl a cordial good-night, and then he returned slowly to the Courier office.

Once more his conscience began to upbraid him for his feelings towards Joy Graham.

"I cannot think of her as belonging to that fellow, Gregory," he said to himself. "If he has any claim on her I believe I owe it to her to rid her of the claim for he is not worthy," and the city reporter's face flushed as he remembered the insolence of Gregory towards him.

"No matter what kind of a man Gregory is that girl is pledged to him as a wife and it is dishonorable for you to act as you have done to-night and feel towards her as you do now."

Some other voice in his soul, and a voice that did not represent what was lowest in his nature, as he well knew, spoke these words imperiously to the perplexed youth.

He was glad when he reached the Courier office and he plunged at once into the task of getting his "copy" ready for the special morning edition of the paper. It was long after midnight when he retired to rest in the Cameron home.

CHAPTER XII.

MAN TO MAN.

"You can do just as you please. If you don't care anything about God and if you don't care anything about the results of your actions, you can lie if you want to; you can steal if you want to; you can fight booze, you can commit adultery if you want to, but listen to me: be not deceived; God is not mocked, and what you sow, you'll reap. You can go your way and you can go it to the limit, but as sure as there is a God above you will have to pay the price."

With these words, spoken with intense earnestness, Billy Sunday began an address to the men of Bronson and the surrounding country one Sunday afternoon. It was a thrilling sight for the evangelist when he stepped on the platform. The immense tabernacle was crowded to the rear doors, fully ten thousand men being massed together in the most wonderful religious service ever held in all Michigan. In the choir loft there were fully one thousand more men and boys. It was after three weeks of hard campaigning, during which Mr. Sunday had preached as no one ever preached before in Bronson. He had denounced sin, hypocrisy, ungodliness and every form of evil in a terrific manner, using at times a vocabulary of his own. He pic-

tured the results of infidelity with unsparing vividness. But he had kept his great audiences night after night in good humor and he carried public sentiment with him in a manner that amazed such men as Bud McCrea and Mr. Graham. In his pictures of heaven and in his descriptions of hell the evangelist became a tragedian and the people rejoiced and trembled in turn. After the first two weeks he began to plead with men to forsake their sins and surrender themselves to Jesus Christ and take up the Christian life. The response to his invitations were immediate. Hundreds pressed forward to confess their willingness to live henceforth for God. Amongst the penitents had been men of all classes, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. Some society women crowded to the front in company with operatives from the Gregory factory. Students from the Normal school, and professors also, were amongst the throng which "hit the sawdust trail."

The Courier devoted more than half its space every day to reporting the meetings and religion was the sole topic of interest in Bronson. Prayer meetings were held every day in every section of the city; shop meetings at noon were addressed by scores of ministers and prominent laymen. Business men who had never before mentioned religion to their associates now pleaded with them to accept the Christian faith.

Elaborate preparations had been made beforehand to insure the success of the great men's mass meeting that Sunday afternoon. It was a beautiful Winter Sabbath, and Reginald Nelson, who had remained faithfully at the presstable night after night, sat on the

platform and watched the regiments of men throng into the tabernacle. When the multiplied thousands filled the broad arena he said to himself, "This is an army."

After the opening signing and prayer "Billy" Sunday began his address. At the opening sentence he caught the attention of all."

"I am going to hit right out from the shoulder to-day, men," he continued. "God knows I feel kindly towards you and that I have no other aim than a desire to help you. Before you leave the tabernacle I hope I shall have convinced you that I did not come here to-day to pump you full of hot air."

Here the speaker unloosened his collar and tie and laid them on a near-by chair, and also removed his coat.

"I am trying to practice what I preach," he exclaimed, "for I throw too many rocks at other people to live in a glass house. I am trying the best I know how to trot square."

There was a burst of applause from the audience, and Mr. Sunday continued with increasing animation:

"I know what it is to work. I lived on a farm in early life and from nine years of age I have been doing a man's work in the world. My father died in the war and my mother was left a widow with a family of small children. I tell you I have crawled up out of the sewers of poverty."

The great army of men were now listening intently, and the evangelist plunged into his theme.

"I have been told a good many things about some of you fellows here in Bronson," he declared, walking

up to the edge of the platform and glaring out over the throng. "I know that some of you go home at night, you old devils, from places where you wouldn't think of taking your wife for all the world. And you young bucks, I know about you too. Some of you go down to the haunts of vice, and if some one asks you to go to the tabernacle and hear Bill, you answer, 'Oh, no, he is too d—d vulgar.' You miserable, little low-down wretches, some of you are so low down that you would have to reach up to touch the bottom, and you are so crooked you could hide behind a corkscrew."

These statements evoked roars of laughter and applause, but Reginald could see a number of young men flush as the speaker made these biting remarks, and amongst them was Roland Gregory, who had attended the meeting for the first time that afternoon.

"I know the fellows who will find fault with my talk to-day," continued Billy Sunday. "Every fellow that is not toting square, every fellow who is lecherous, false, dishonest and mean will go away from here and cuss me, but you men who believe in what is right, and who want to see Bronson cleaned up, you men who are trying to live the right kind of a life, I know you are with me. I don't expect to please either fools or rascals and I never try to."

"Christianity appeals to strong men," he shouted. "It is the weak man who is the sinner. Sin is too much for him. The Gospel makes the weak strong."

Many of the older men in the audience could well remember when the speaker's name appeared daily in the papers as the fastest runner in one of the champion

baseball teams in America over twenty years before, and their interest was intense as the former ball player referred to his life on the diamond.

"When I was playing ball," he said, in colloquial tones, "I could run one hundreds yards in ten seconds. I made the circuit of the bases in fourteen seconds. After I became a Christian I was just as good a ball player as before."

The audience was now completely under the power of the evangelist's personality, and he became more personal in his address.

"What are you living for?" he asked. "Some of you are living for money and I have no objection to wealth if it is honestly acquired, but remember this, gentlemen, there will be no pockets in your shrouds and if there were your arms would be too stiff to get your hands into them. When Commodore Vanderbilt, who was worth \$200,000,000 died, someone in Wall Street asked how much he left, and the answer was that he had left it all. These words are true of every one of us. We came into the world without a dollar and we go out without a dollar. If all the millionaires in hell could pool their money they couldn't buy a drop of water to cool their parched tongues. Remember that, you old repro-bates," roared the evangelist. "You can't take your gold and silver with you when you leave this world, and it wouldn't do you any good," he added, parenthetically, "if you did take it for it would all melt."

A smile rippled over the audience at this remark.

"Some of you are living for lust," cried Mr. Sunday. Here the speaker launched into a discussion of

the social evil and of its effects on society. He made a strong plea for a single standard of morals. "You cowardly, contemptible young hound," he shouted, directing his attention to a crowd of younger men, "you betray the trust of an innocent young girl and society still recognizes you, while the umpire shouts, 'The girl is out.' I tell you it does not make any difference to God whether you wear a plug hat or a hairpin. It makes no difference to Him whether you wear a coat or a petticoat. God does not recognize two standards, and any society that does is too low down for me."

Mr. Sunday then turned his attention to the liquor business and attacked the open saloon in vigorous words.

"The saloons of Bronson," he exclaimed, "are the vendors of poison; they are the breeding places of crime and pauperism; they are the nesting places of anarchy and the incubators of lawlessness. If no one ever preached before to these old bull-necked fellows there is one here now who is not afraid to do it."

A number of saloon keepers and bar-tenders in the audience lowered their heads quickly.

"Let us stop finding fault with the sins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," continued the speaker. "Let us speak plainly about the vileness and corruption of this infamous business right here in Bronson, and we'll see better times. When I get through preaching here you can throw me in the Bronson River if you want to, but I know you will have to say, 'There goes a man who stood up for our homes, our wives, our children and our community.' Don't you see it, men," he said,

pleadingly. "I am fighting for you and for your homes."

In bringing his address to a close, Mr. Sunday again referred to his baseball experiences.

"I used to play ball," he said simply. "I played center and left field on the old Chicago White Stockings. I don't believe their equal was ever known, and I am sure their superior never was. One season we played all year with eleven men. It is over twenty years ago now," he continued, while the audience bent forward to hear him speak. "The team was in Chicago. It was Sunday afternoon and I was with a company of ball players who were then famous throughout the world. We went into a saloon. After coming out we walked to the corner of State and Madison Streets, and sat down on the curbing. Across the street a company of men and women were playing on horns, flutes, and slide trombones, and some others were singing gospel hymns. They were the very hymns I used to hear my mother sing back in the log cabin in Iowa when I was a child. They were the songs I used to sing myself in the Sunday school back in the old church."

There were tears in the eyes of the evangelist and his voice was tender as he spoke. Thousands of men looked at the speaker through dimmed eyes and the silence in the tabernacle was profound.

"I listened," continued the ex-champion of the diamond, "and God painted on the canvas of my recollection and memory a vivid picture of the scenes of other days and other faces. I began to cry and sob. and my heart was, Oh, so lonely. A young man

stepped out and said, 'We are going down to the Pacific Garden Mission. Won't you come with us? I am sure you will all enjoy it.' I arose to my feet and said to the other boys, 'Good-bye, I'm going down to the Mission with this crowd.' They saw I was interested and some laughed, others mocked, but one of them encouraged me. Some of them looked at me in silence. I left them at the corner, went to the Mission and got down on my knees and gave my heart to Jesus Christ. I went over to the west side of Chicago and joined the Jefferson Park Presbyterian Church."

"Amen, praise God," said an old, gray haired man near the front when the evangelist had finished the story of his conversion.

"I have thanked God ever since for saving me that day," continued the speaker. "Listen, men, the other boys who were with me that afternoon are now nearly all gone." The speaker then told of the sad fates of his fellow ball players who were on the White Stocking team. One of them had died in an insane asylum in Michigan, a victim of cigarettes; another had crawled into a drunkard's grave; another died in poverty and squalor as a consequence of his sins. "Which of those boys won out that Sunday afternoon?" he asked. "Did I or did they? Thank God, I won through Jesus Christ. I am what I am through Him."

The speaker paused, and said abruptly, "How many of you men will say, 'Thank you, Bill, your sermon has helped me'?"

The men began to rise in scores and hundreds and thousands, until it seemed that every man in the taber-

nacle was on his feet. They sang a hymn and as they sang the evangelist plead with the men to come forward and do as he had done twenty years before and more in Chicago.

"Who will be the first to step out before this host of men and declare himself a Christian?" shouted the evangelist.

In a moment Reginald Nelson stepped from the press table to the sawdust floor and made his way over to where Mr. Sunday was standing. As Reginald did so he caught sight of Thomas Marchmount walking down the aisle and the two men approached the evangelist together, who greeted them with a fervent "Thank God." As the editor and city reporter of the *Courier* were recognized a round of applause arose, and others began to stream towards the front. Amongst them was Edgar Prince, one of the largest manufacturers of Bronson. The sight of their employer "hitting the sawdust trail" stirred up scores of the employees in his factory to follow his example, and the front of the tabernacle was soon filled with the penitents.

"This means a new Bronson," cried Billy Sunday, as he saw the wave of spiritual power sweeping over the audience, and men yielding to Jesus Christ in hundreds.

When the meeting was dismissed the scenes in the tabernacle were overpowering. Fathers and sons wept on each others' necks. Friends shook hands with friends, tears coursing down their cheeks for very joy. Mr. Cameron made his way to the platform where

Reginald was getting his notes together, and threw his arms around the young man, crying out, "Thank God, my boy, I have been praying for you."

For the first time since he left England the immigrant broke down entirely and wept himself in uncontrollable emotion. When he could speak he turned to Mr. Cameron and said, "I mean it. I have surrendered myself heart and soul to God this day."

Mr. Cameron pressed his hand warmly in response. A little later Mr. Marchmont also greeted Reginald. The veteran editor's eyes were moist as he told the younger man, "I have come back from many years of wandering," and then laying his hand affectionately on Reginald's shoulder, he added, "I owe something to you for showing me that Christianity is a reality in the world."

Reginald did not understand what he meant at the time, but he shook hands warmly with his employer.

Out amongst the audience, meanwhile, another kind of scene was being enacted. George Caldwell sat in the choir loft during the sermon and had noticed the growing interest of Roland Gregory in the service. At the close of the meeting George hastened to the place where Roland Gregory was sitting and began to urge him to begin the Christian life.

"I have been wanting to talk to you about this for several days," said George Caldwell. "How happy it will make Joy if you accept Christ and become a Christian man."

Roland Gregory arose to his feet and stood with bowed head.

"Won't you come up to the front and settle the matter pending on his right choice then.

"I would like to," said Roland, in a shaking voice.

George Caldwell was delighted to see the unusual interest which the young man showed. "Come," he urged, "it is only a step. Take the step to-day, now, right now."

"Oh, George, I can't. It would mean too much. I can't, I can't." There was a wail, as of anguish, in the young manufacturer's voice, and George Caldwell was greatly moved.

"Let us get down on our knees, Roland," he said. "I will pray for you."

"No, no, I can't kneel before God," said the other, "I'm lost, George, I'm lost." Roland Gregory broke into tears.

"Settle it now," pleaded the other, also greatly moved. "See how many others have surrendered. Did you not see Mr. Marchmont, Mr. Prince and young Mr. Nelson?"

"Yes, they can be saved, but not me, not me."

Roland Gregory turned and hurried away, leaving his friend wondering at his intense interest and at his despairing words.

"I will tell Joy Graham about it," said George Caldwell to himself, "and we will win Roland yet. He needs salvation or he will be lost."

George Caldwell was thinking of some authenticated stories which he had recently heard of Gregory's habits, and he felt that the young manufacturer was

at the parting of the ways, and that his destiny depended on his right choice then.

Thinking that it would be best to see Joy Graham at once in regard to Roland, he went directly from the tabernacle to the Graham home. George Caldwell found that Mr. Graham had just arrived from the men's meeting as he had been in attendance, but as he sat near the rear George had not seen him.

"Was not that a great and wonderful religious service?" said the young man as he greeted Mr. Graham.

The elder man frowned slightly and replied, "Mr. Sunday is a magnetic speaker, I admit, but I do not believe in so much excitement as there was at the tabernacle to-day. I was surprised to see the actions of Mr. Prince and Mr. Marchmount. I thought they were more self-controlled."

George Caldwell was too much astonished at Mr. Graham's reply to make any further response, and he saw at once that Mr. Graham would not assist in any way in aiding Roland Gregory to become a Christian. It then suddenly dawned on George Caldwell that Mr. Graham, although the leading trustee of Central Church in Bronson was not himself a Christian professor, and he ventured to ask him about it.

"Would not this be a good time, Mr. Graham," he asked, "for you to make a public confession of your faith in Christ? You know you are a trustee of our church."

Mr. Graham frowned again and answered, "If I were going to become a Christian I would not do so at a time of excitement like this."

Just then Joy Graham entered the room, and the older man seemed glad to escape.

George Caldwell told in glowing language of the afternoon service at the tabernacle and of the presence and interest of Roland Gregory.

"I have been praying for Roland," said the girl, her eyes filling with tears. "God is answering my prayers."

"Do not tell him that I told you," cautioned the other, "as it might offend him, for you know how sensitive Roland is."

"I will be careful," said the girl.

"By the way," added George, as he rose to leave, "Mr. Nelson came forward this afternoon, along with Mr. Marchmount and Mr. Prince."

"Splendid," answered the girl, with beaming eyes. "I am so glad to know that Mr. Nelson has decided the question. I could see every night how his interest in the sermons of Mr. Sunday was increasing. Is not Mr. Sunday a wonder?"

"He is a man qualified by God for a wonderful work in our country," said George Caldwell, earnestly.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOY GRAHAM MAKES A DISCOVERY

"Are you going to Augsley this evening, Joy?"

"Yes, mama, I promised Dr. Rutledge that I would accompany them to-night and sing a solo."

Joy Graham and her mother were talking one morning about two weeks after the close of the tabernacle meetings. Augsley was a small town near Bronson and a number of the new converts had planned to accompany Allan Rutledge and Mr. Townley and hold an evangelistic meeting in Augsley. Not only this village, but a whole circle of small towns around Bronson were in this way to share the religious enthusiasm which had been generated during the Sunday campaign.

"Do you think Roland would care to go?" asked Joy's mother, a little anxiously.

"Isn't it too bad that neither Roland nor papa got any good from those wonderful meetings. If only they had attended they would soon have seen that their judgment of our evangelist was prejudiced." There was a little tremble in Joy's voice and the suspicion of a tear as she spoke.

"Well, well, child, we will have to make the best of it," responded Mrs. Graham. "We ought to be happy that so many have been won to the Christian faith

during the past month. I was reminded of the old-time revivals which I supposed were utterly impossible in this day of culture."

As Mrs. Graham said the Sunday meetings had been an unparalleled success. Upwards of eight thousand converts had professed conversion to the religion of Christ. Amongst these were many of the public men of the community, including almost every county officer, a number of lawyers, some of the most prominent physicians, as well as well-known business men. During the last week "Billy" Sunday had carried everything before him. The *Courier* carried his sermons far and wide over southern Michigan, and this had stirred up the churches in the surrounding vilages, and they had asked for help from the new converts in Bronson. Under the leadership of Allan Rutledge a series of meetings were arranged, and that evening a company, including Reginald Nelson, Edgar Prince, and Thomas Marchmont intended to inaugurate this new and strange evangelism by holding a meeting in Augsburg.

"I will go down to Roland's office this morning, and see if I cannot persuade him to go with me to-night," said Joy, after a pause. "If he can hear Mr. Prince give his testimony it may be as good as a sermon from Mr. Sunday because Roland has always been an admirer of Mr. Prince."

"It is a very unpleasant day to be out," answered Mrs. Graham, looking out of the window. The March winds were blowing furiously and the trees were bending before the blasts.

"I will take the street car," responded the girl,

promptly. "I am not afraid of these March breezes."

In a little while Joy Graham entered the private office of Roland Gregory. The young manufacturer was alone, sitting with downcast head, and before he was able to glance up and see who his visitor was, Joy Graham noticed a hardness about his face which was new to her.

Looking up he arose somewhat confused, but soon regained his self-possession and greeted his fiancé cordially.

"What were you thinking about just now?" asked Joy, when she had seated herself, and removed her wraps.

She looked closely at Roland as she asked the question and she saw an uneasy look come to his eyes at the question. But he turned to her lightly and asked, "And what may your thoughts be this morning, my Joy? What is on your mind that you have journeyed down to the office such a day as this?"

"I want to invite you to come with a party of us to Augsburg this evening. We are going to hold a meeting there and I have promised to sing. I want you as an escort."

Roland Gregory's face assumed again the hard look which Joy had noticed when she entered his office. He was silent a moment and said, a little testily:

"I thought we would get a rest after that clown, Sunday, left town. Are they going to keep up this religious nonsense all Summer?"

"Roland, how can you talk so?" responded the girl, reprovingly. "You only heard Mr. Sunday speak once

and George Caldwell told me you were almost converted at that meeting."

Roland Gregory turned fiercely on her. "What did George say about it?"

The girl started at his sudden and peremptory question, and responded a little tartly, "What's ailing you, Roland? You don't act like you used to do at all. George told me that you almost decided to become a Christian at the meeting you attended. It was that men's meeting when so many of our Bronson men made the start. I wish you had gone to the front that day along with Mr. Prince." The girl's voice became kinder as she spoke and she finished in an affectionate tone of voice. Going to the young man's side she laid her hand on his shoulder and continued, "Roland, I have been praying for you these last few weeks. I am afraid unless you become a Christian I will never be happy as your wife."

Roland Gregory dropped his head and his face flushed. He was silent, but the girl waited a few moments before speaking again.

"Won't you come with me to Augsley to-night, Roland?" Joy pleaded with him, earnestly, her hand still on his shoulder.

"Who are going?" he asked in a strained voice.

"Mr. Prince and Mr. Marchmount and Dr. Gracely and a whole lot of people that you know," answered the girl, quickly. "Mr. Nelson is going too. He and Mr. Prince are to make the speeches."

At the mention of Mr. Nelson's name Roland frowned.

"And Vivian Derwent and a lot of the young people from the Normal School are going," continued Joy, not noticing the frown on the other's face.

"I don't want to go anywhere that Nelson goes. I think that young prig is a fine Christian."

Joy Graham was sorry she had mentioned Reginald's name for she remembered that during the tabernacle meetings Roland Gregory had refused to allow his employees to use the factory for a noon meeting, and Reginald had written it up with a big headline. The article had created a good deal of discussion as even saloons had permitted the Sunday workers to enter and hold religious services. Following on the former publicity which his factory had received this last write-up in the *Courier* had angered Gregory and he vowed that if there were any more such articles printed he would visit the *Courier* office in person.

"You always admired Mr. Prince," said Joy, persuasively. "Won't you come and hear him give his testimony to-night. I am going to sing, too."

"You are," exclaimed the other, "I think, Joy, you are carrying this thing too far altogether. Does your father approve of your running around the country in this way?"

"He does not disapprove," answered the other, stoutly; "and mama thinks it is all right. Dr. Rutledge and his wife are going, and she sings also. You had better come along, Roland. Don't be so contrary."

"I have an important business engagement this evening," said Roland Gregory, taking out his watch,

nervously. "I will let you know this afternoon whether I can go or not."

The girl soon left the office, rather crestfallen, and puzzled in regard to her promised husband.

"Roland seems to have been changing these few months," she said to herself. "I do not feel towards him as I used to. I wonder what is wrong." She walked home meditatively, preferring the long walk to the more rapid transit by street car.

Near her own home she met Allan Rutledge face to face.

"You will be with us to-night, won't you, Miss Graham," said the minister.

"Certainly," she responded, promptly.

"Mrs. Rutledge, you know, is going to sing to-night," said Dr. Rutledge. "And I think it would be very nice if you and she could also sing a duet. Can you come over this afternoon for a while and practice?"

"I shall be glad to do so," responded Joy, her face brightening.

"I have a long list of applicants for church membership," continued the minister. "Something like five hundred will join our church next Sabbath morning. However, I am sorry to miss the names of your father and of Roland Gregory."

The girl's face fell and she answered sadly, "It is too bad. Mama and I were speaking about it this morning. I have just come from Roland's office. I asked him to come to Augsburg to-night, but I am

afraid he won't go. He seems to avoid all religious services of any kind."

"He was present at one of our most glorious services in the tabernacle one Sunday afternoon," said Alan Rutledge. "I noticed his close attention to Mr. Sunday's address, and at the close George Caldwell found him greatly interested, but I never saw him in the tabernacle after that."

"No," responded the girl, "he left the very next day for Chicago, and did not return until just a day or two before the meetings closed. He seems to be very bitter against Mr. Sunday."

"I blame your father, somewhat," responded the minister, in a sad tone of voice. "I am sure you feel as I do that Mr. Graham ought to have encouraged Mr. Gregory, but I fear he strengthened him in his opposition to the meetings."

The girl remained silent and Allan Rutledge added, quickly, "Pardon me, Miss Graham, I did not mean to accuse your father in your presence, but I think you will have to be patient with Roland."

On that afternoon Joy Graham called at the Rutledge home to practice a duet with Mrs. Rutledge. The minister's wife received her cordially for she and Joy Graham were now close friends.

"How your baby grows," exclaimed the girl, taking little Anne Rutledge in her arms.

"I don't know how I will be able to leave the children so long this evening," said Mrs. Rutledge, but Allan wanted me to go with the rest to Augsburg and sing 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,' to the people there. I sang

it once at a shop-meeting in Wellington before Allan and I were married, and he has never forgotten it."

"I will be so glad to hear you sing to-night myself," said Joy, with enthusiasm, "but tell me about that shop-meeting in Wellington, Mrs. Rutledge."

The minister's wife related the incident to the girl, adding as she finished, "Some day I will tell you a sad tragedy that happened at Wellington. I have not time to-day, but some time I will tell you. It is about a beautiful young Bohemian girl, Viola Antol, who was killed by her false lover. The sad death of Mae Morbray, one of the girls at the Gregory factory, reminded Allan of the tragedy in Iowa and we were speaking of it not long ago."

"What became of poor Mae's mother?" asked Joy, sympathetically.

"Did you not know that the church is supporting her. Poor woman, she is utterly desolate. Some day I will take you out to see her."

"I shall be glad to go," responded Joy. "Let us go to-morrow."

Before leaving the Rutledge home Joy Graham called up Roland Gregory on the telephone and asked him if he had decided to accompany her to Augsburg. The young man answered in the negative, pleading his business engagement.

"Before I knew of your engagement to Roland Gregory," said Mrs. Rutledge, "I used to think that you and Reginald Nelson made the finest couple I had seen in Michigan, but poor Reginald arrived on the scene too late for victory, didn't he, Joy?"

Mrs. Rutledge spoke playfully, but she noticed Joy's face suddenly assume a serious look. The minister's wife changed the subject and the two friends soon parted.

"Our duet will be a success, I am sure," said Mrs. Rutledge as she bade Joy good-bye.

It was a happy crowd of crusaders who journeyed that evening to Augsley. The meeting was even more of a success than Allan Rutledge had hoped. The energetic spirit of the ex-baseball star had permeated the entire vicinity of Bronson, and the few church members at Augsley had taken on new life and had widely advertised the coming of the Bronson party. The church in which the meeting was held was the largest in the village, but it was crowded to overflowing and a second meeting was arranged hastily at another church. The songs of Joy Graham and Mrs. Rutledge were listened to with absorbing interest, and as Allan Rutledge heard his wife sing the old, but ever new hymn of trust, "Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly," he was carried back in imagination to scenes in his ministry in Wellington when he had first heard his wife sing, and first began to understand the tremendous power of Christian song.

Edgar Prince, the manufacturer, of Bronson, was the first speaker, and his testimony was listened to with the closest attention.

"We business men in Bronson have seen a great light," he began. "If any one had told me two months ago that I would be addressing an audience at a religious service I would have laughed with scorn. But

here I am to-night able to bear witness that Jesus can save even a manufacturer. Let Jesus into your hearts, men," he exclaimed, "and he will make your whole life over as he has made mine in the past few weeks."

He then told how he had first been arrested by a statement of the evangelist who quoted the Bible where it says, "The wages of sin is death."

"I couldn't get away from those words," he declared, earnestly. "I felt that I was a sinner and that my only hope of salvation was in the Savior."

Thomas Marchmont also spoke, telling of his conversion to Christianity years before and of his long apostacy.

"We have left God out of our lives in Bronson for a good many years, but things have changed. I am happier to-night than I have been in thirty years."

The veteran editor broke down and finished his speech with breaking voice. The entire audience was greatly stirred and Allan Rutledge said to himself, "The same Spirit that blessed us in the tabernacle in Bronson is here to-night."

The last speaker was Reginald Nelson. Before introducing him Allan Rutledge asked Joy Graham and his wife to sing their duet. They chose the touching hymn of Irene Durfee, "Somebody Cares."

The voices of the two beautiful singers blended into exquisite harmony as they sang the chorus,

"Somebody cares for me,
Somebody cares for me,
In all my life his kind hand I see,
Somebody cares, 'tis Jesus."

Amid breathless silence Reginald Nelson arose to speak.

"This is my first attempt at a religious address," he began, "but I feel to-night that if I kept still the very stones would cry out. Men, this is real. We have had a wonderful revival of the old-time religion in Bronson. I want to add my testimony to that of Mr. Prince and Mr. Marchmount. I have surrendered my life to Jesus Christ, who was my mother's Savior, and I can see His kind hand in all my life. Decide to-night, my friends, to live the kind of life you know you ought to live."

He then told of his former objections to the Christian religion and how fully all his doubts and questionings were answered the moment he decided to live for God.

Allan Rutledge then took charge of the meeting and a call was made for penitents. They began to stream towards the front, until full two score confessed their sins.

The crusaders returned astonished and delighted. "Is it not remarkable," said Mr. Townley, who was greatly moved by the talks of the business men. "Is it not remarkable to see and hear such things as we have seen and heard to-night?"

"Ah, Mr. Townley," responded Allan Rutledge, "we need a 'Billy' Sunday once in a while to remind us of the simplest Gospel facts. In the light of Christian history what we have seen to-night is nothing at all unusual when men have really become sincere in their Christian faith."

"But much work still needs to be done in Bronson," remarked Mr. Townley.

"Certainly," said Allan Rutledge, quickly. "We are only beginning. Before very long I am going to propose a new plan of campaign that will astound the enemy in Bronson more than the tabernacle meetings."

"You are God's man, Dr. Rutledge," said the other, earnestly. "All my scepticism about your methods has gone."

Alone in her room after her return late at night to her home, Joy Graham went over the events of the day. She sat in deep study reflecting over her past life and at last she started up as the clock struck one o'clock.

"I am afraid I have made a mistake," she sighed. "I ought never to have pledged myself to Roland."

One sentence remained with her all the long hours. It was the playful speech of Mrs. Rutledge when she said, "I thought you and Reginald Nelson the finest couple I had seen in Michigan."

Joy Graham contrasted Roland Gregory and the city editor of the *Courier*.

"The one is a consecrated Christian gentleman; the other—" She dared not finish her speech.

"Is it too late?" she questioned. "Can I break my pledged word with Roland?"

She remembered the story of Anne Rutledge and how she remained true to her first lover even after he had proven false until he would release her, and how Mrs. Rutledge, in telling it, had commended her for this high principle.

"I am pledged to Roland," she decided, "but if he will release me I will be free."

Then conscience upbraided her. It was her duty to be loyal to her betrothed husband. The engagement had been announced. She must be true to him and win him to the Christian faith. If she deserted him would he not be justified in despising Christianity? Alas, for Joy Graham.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MOTHER'S BROKEN HEART.

The day following the excursion of the Bronson lay-gospellers to Augsley, Joy Graham and Mrs. Rutledge visited the lonely mother of the hapless Mae Mobray. It was a pleasant March day, and they took with them little Anna and Abraham.

"It will do the poor woman good to see the children," said Mrs. Rutledge. They found Mrs. Mobray alone in her desolate little home. The childless widow was roused somewhat from her melancholy by the appearance of the two young women, and especially by the sunshine of the children's presence. Charles Dickens was a lover of children and it was he who wrote these touching words in regard to their influence:

"They are idols of hearts and of households;
They are angels of God, in disguise;
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes.
Oh, those truants from home and from heaven,
They make me more manly and mild;
And I know now how Jesus can liken
The Kingdom of God to a child."

"The blessed babe," said Mrs. Mobray as she fondled in her empty arms little Anna Rutledge. "I remember when my poor Mae was a baby. Oh, we were so happy then. Mr. Mobray was such a good husband. We lived then at Augsley, a little place near here."

"Augsley," exclaimed Joy Graham, "why we were at Augsley last night. I wish you could have been with us. A company of Bronson people went there and held a meeting."

Joy Graham then told of the meeting and of the number of penitents who came forward to reward the efforts of the party of campaigners.

"The sight of Augsley would drive me mad," said the woman. "I would be reminded at every step of my former happiness and it would make this present life of misery in Bronson unbearable altogether."

"Cheer up, cheer up," said Mrs. Rutledge, in a bright tone. "You have many friends in Bronson. After you get a little stronger Dr. Rutledge wants to engage you as baby-tender at the church."

"Baby-tender?" interposed Joy Graham, questioningly.

"Yes," explained the minister's wife, "we are going to set apart a room in the church where tired mothers can leave their babies when they come to the services, and Dr. Rutledge thought that Mrs. Mobray would be just the one to take charge of it."

The eyes of the woman brightened as she listened.

"I had not heard of that," she said, quickly. "I

would just love to do work like that, and then I would feel that I was worth something after all."

"Of course, you are worth something," said Mrs. Rutledge, encouragingly. You are worth more than all the world in God's sight, you know."

The woman was silent for a moment and then shook her head.

"It has been very dark to me since Mae—" Here the unfortunate mother found relief in tears, being unable to say more.

Mrs. Rutledge knew that tears would be an alleviation to the overburdened heart of the woman, so she arose and put her arms around her and let her weep unrestrainedly.

When the paroxysm of grief was over Mrs. Mobray dried her eyes and spoke brokenly. "I know it is wrong for me to nurse my sorrow as I do, but I have been so crushed. If it had not been for Dr. Rutledge I should have gone mad and died long before this."

When Mrs. Mobray began to weep Joy Graham had taken little Anna out of the widow's arms and had led Abraham into an adjoining room, so that the minister's wife and Mrs. Mobray were left alone.

"The world will grow brighter to you after a while," said Mrs. Rutledge. "Do not despair. There is much to live for, you know."

"Who is the young lady, Miss Graham, who is with you?" asked Mrs. Mobray.

"Don't you know Joy Graham?" said the other, in surprise. "She often sings at the church. She is engaged to be married to Mr. Gregory."

"I thought I had seen her before," said the woman, "but you know I have not been able to get out to church for a long time. I only was able to attend a very few of the tabernacle meetings. Did you say that she is engaged to be married?"

"Yes," responded Mrs. Rutledge, in a low voice. "She and Mr. Roland Gregory are to be married in the Fall."

"Do you mean the Mr. Gregory who owns the factory where Mae worked?"

"Yes," responded Mrs. Rutledge.

"I don't think he's a good man," said the mother, her tears coming back. "Mae used to tell me of the kind of place the factory was when she first went there. She didn't complain about it after their big strike, but I am afraid the poor girl allowed the influence of the place to spoil her."

Just then Joy Graham appeared at the door with the children, and was about to enter, but Mrs. Rutledge waved her back as the tears had once more started to the eyes of the widow. The two women were left alone and then Mrs. Rutledge enquired regarding her young daughter's life at the factory and the circumstances of her death.

"Dr. Rutledge told me to enquire fully in regard to this, or I would not trouble you," said the minister's wife, kindly. "He thinks that poor Mae was sadly sinned against, and he thinks the case ought to be investigated. Don't be afraid to tell me everything."

The poor mother seemed glad to relieve her soul by telling in detail all that she knew in regard to her

daughter. "I wanted to tell all this to some one," she said, as she finished, "but it is a terrible thing for me to speak of these things unless to someone like you."

"Here is the ring Mae had on her finger," said the woman, tearfully, handing a beautiful marriage ring to Mrs. Rutledge. "I did not say anything about this to any one before as I thought I would let the poor girl's secret die with her, but something tells me I ought to tell the whole truth."

"You will feel better after this confession," said Mrs. Rutledge, sympathetically. "I will give this ring to Dr. Rutledge. It will help solve the tragedy and may prevent another. There are some men in our modern American life, often in honored positions, whose private lives are unspeakable."

"I don't want poor Mae avenged," said the mother, "but I would go through hell, I think, to save any other mother from the tortures I have endured."

Mrs. Rutledge looked at her companion in sympathy. "You have not suffered in vain," she said, softly. "Out of such suffering as yours God is bringing redemption to our world."

The conversation had aroused Mrs. Mobray and there was a new light in her eyes as she said, "This visit of yours has helped me. I was so miserable when you came that I felt I could not live another day, but somehow I feel different."

"Come, Joy," cried Mrs. Rutledge to her friend in the adjoining room. Joy Graham had closed the door and was amusing Abraham and Anna while the conversation between the two women was going on.

"I want to go home, mama," said the little fellow, running up to his mother as Joy opened the door of the adjoining room.

"What a manly boy," said Mrs. Mobray. "You are surely proud of your little son."

"You know every mother thinks her babies are the best that ever were," said Mrs. Rutledge, smilingly, "and I am no exception."

On their way home Mrs. Rutledge told of her husband's efforts to assist Mrs. Mobray.

"He interested some of the business men in her sad case," said Mrs. Rutledge, "and they were able to buy that little cottage in which she lives and give it to her. The church has been supporting her, as she and her daughter barely made a living, and since Mae's death the poor woman has been altogether unable to work."

"What did she talk to you about for so long when you were together?" asked Joy later, moved by a not unnatural curiosity.

"She was telling me some more of the details connected with the sad fate of her daughter. I cannot tell you about it now, but some time I will. Dr. Rutledge asked me to find out."

That evening Mrs. Rutledge told her husband Mrs. Mobray's story in full and also gave him the ring which the woman had given her.

"I thought there was more that she knew," said Allan Rutledge, seriously, when his wife had finished. "I have some dark suspicions already but I will not allow them to influence me until I get proof. If Mae Mobray was murdered there must be something done.

Justice must not become a byword in Bronson just because the victim happens to be a poor girl."

"I was telling Mrs. Mobray about your plan to make her official baby-tender at the church," said the wife a little later, "and she seemed delighted with the prospects. We must arouse the woman and get her interested in some kind of work. Her condition was pitiable when I called to-day, but I think Joy and I did her some good."

"What a treasure of a girl Joy Graham is," said Dr. Rutledge, enthusiastically, "but I can't bear the thought of her marrying Roland Gregory."

"She spoke to me this afternoon about Roland. She thinks it is part of her duty to win him to the better life."

"I never believed in this business of marrying men to reform them. It never worked yet and it never will. It only means broken hearts and two wrecked lives instead of one." The minister spoke earnestly and added, "I am going to preach soon from the text, 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' and I shall say some pertinent things on this very subject."

"Your sermon will be too late to help Joy," said the wife, shaking her head. "She has already plighted her troth to Roland and she feels that she is already bound to him. She spoke to me a little about it to-day."

Dr. Rutledge looked grave and the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of little Abraham in his pajamas to say good-night. The mother left the

room with her son, and Allan Rutledge sat alone with his thoughts.

In his hand he still held the ring which Mrs. Mobray had given to his wife. He looked at the gold band for a moment and then said to himself, "Pledge of falsehood and token of cruelty, you represent to me all that is lowest and vilest in the soul of a man. Speak, guilty ring, and tell me your fatal secret."

The ring lay, shining and beautiful, in the palm of his hand.

"No," he continued, speaking aloud, "beautiful ring of gold, thou art innocent. Alas, how the most sacred things are trampled under foot by swinish men."

He examined the ring closely, and noticed a little number stamped on the inside, along with a special trade mark.

"I can get this ring identified," he said to himself, quickly, as he looked at the distinguishing mark on the ring. "I shall send it to-morrow to a detective agency in Chicago. This ring will tell its secret and if there is blood on it the murder will out."

He put the ring carefully in a drawer in his desk expecting to send it to Chicago the following day, but that very night he had a visitor who drove all thought of the ring out of his mind.

Soon after Allan Rutledge deposited the fatal ring in the drawer his door bell ring. He arose and went to the door himself, and was somewhat surprised to see Reginald Nelson standing there.

"Come in, Mr. Nelson," he said, cordially, grasping the city reporter's hand.

Reginald entered and apologized for his late visit. "I thought I would likely catch you at home at this time," he said, in an apologetic tone, "and I wanted to see you alone."

"What has happened now?" asked the minister, noticing the earnest look on Reginald's face.

"I have learned some things today which make me feel that we must not think the millenium has come to Bronson yet," said the other, seating himself by the comfortable grate fire. "While a number of us were trying to serve God in Augsley last night the devil was busy in Bronson."

"It seems that every evil resort in Bronson has redoubled its efforts since the close of the tabernacle meetings," continued Reginald, gazing into the fire. "While we had Mr. Sunday with us I understand that the saloons and gambling dens and the other resorts were almost deserted. Many of the fellows who patronized these places were converted, and there is a determined effort being made to win the poor young converts back to the old life."

Allan Rutledge looked grave. "I had been planning an attack on the social institutions of iniquity but I did not think we would need to be in a hurry."

"That is just why I called tonight," said Reginald, hastily. "I knew that you were planning to give a good deal of your time to evangelistic work in neighboring towns for a month or two. Excuse me for saying it, but I think it is a mistake. The iron is hot in Bronson now; let us strike at once."

"What do you mean?" asked the minister, surprised to see the earnestness of the newspaper reporter.

"Well," began Reginald, "last night some of the weaker converts were lured into a haunt of vice, filled with liquor, and disgraced. One of them happened to be a young man from a respectable family, and in making his way home he got into the wrong house, and awoke the neighborhood. That is how I happened to hear about it. The family came to the Courier office in awful distress and they want us to say nothing about it."

"It is very plain, isn't it," said the minister, with a touch of bitterness in his voice, "that the devil is not dead, nor has he turned Christian."

"Mr. Marchmount was at first going to suppress the matter, but as he thought it over he felt assured that he would publish it if the offence had been committed by some one of no social standing and he decided to treat this case exactly as he would any other. There is going to be quite a write-up in tomorrow's paper about the affair. I am sorry. It seems to show that Mr. Sunday's work was very superficial, but I know it was real." The young man spoke the words, "I know," with emphasis.

Allan Rutledge sat in silence and the two men gazed into the glowing fire.

"I have been roused to action by the scorn of the enemy," said Reginald, after a long pause. "I met Mr. McCrea this afternoon, and he leered in my face and asked me if I was going to tell all about the actions of some of 'Billy's' converts."



"NO, BEAUTIFUL RING OF GOLD. THOU ART INNOCENT."

"Did he dare to do that?" asked Allan Rutledge, incredulously.

"He made a mistake when he roused me as he did," responded the reporter. "I told him right then that I was convinced that even Gabriel himself would need fumigating if he associated with some of the people of Bronson before he could return to heaven."

The minister laughed and said, "You seem to be getting the Sundayesque style."

"I admit I was angry with McCrea," said the young man; "but, seriously, Dr. Rutledge, unless we can do something to heal these open sores in our social life a large number of these young converts will surely back-slide. Let us begin action at once for the cleaning up of Bronson."

"I have been regretting very much that our council did not come under the Sunday influence more," said the minister. "If only the mayor and a majority of the council had been converted we could have ousted these evil places in a week. That is what has happened in a number of Iowa towns after Mr. Sunday's meetings."

"McCrea knew that and he used all his power with the city administration to keep them away from the tabernacle."

"Our present city administration represented very well the old Bronson, but they misrepresent the new Bronson," said Allan Rutledge.

"But the trouble is," persisted Reginald, "that the old administration keep in power until next election and I fear that by that time our newly recruited forces

of righteousness will be sadly weakened by desertions unless we can arouse strong public sentiment against these open and protected evils. We must begin a fight for civic decency at once."

"What do you propose?" asked the minister, surprised to see the grasp of the situation shown by the young man.

"I was reading in my Bible the other day," began the other, "and I turned to the book of Nehemiah. I like Nehemiah someway. He seems so modern and practical to me. When he came to Jerusalem to assist the people in rebuilding the ruined city the first thing he did was to arise by night and make a night circuit of the city. You remember the incident?"

Allan Rutledge nodded, and the city reporter of the *Courier* continued, "With a few friends Nehemiah went around valley gate, dung gate, the jackal's wall, and viewed the broken down walls of the once proud city of Zion. After this investigation he called the people together, described the desolation of the city and cried, 'Let us arise and build.' I think we ought to imitate the ancient patriot."

"The Bible is a practical book to you, I see," remarked the minister, smiling.

"This is a practical world," replied the other. "What do you think of my plan?"

"What exactly is your plan?" asked Allan Rutledge, becoming more earnest. "You have told me of the methods of Nehemiah, but Bronson is not broken down in exactly the same way as ancient Jerusalem."

"I want you and Mr. Townley to accompany me

through Bronson in the night time. I will engage the services of a policeman, who I know will consent to guide us, and we will see things that are done under the cover of night in this city."

"What night do you propose to go on this scouting expedition?" enquired the other.

"The sooner the better. Let it be tomorrow night. We can make the arrangements tomorrow. We will start from the Courier office at eleven o'clock."

"Will that not be a little late?" said Dr. Rutledge, questioningly.

"Bronson's underworld awakes when others sink to sleep," responded Reginald. "I have been making a complete sociological survey of our city for some time. This midnight tour will almost complete my investigations."

Allan Rutledge consented, somewhat reluctantly, to join in Reginald's expedition. "It will be a painful night for me," he said to himself, "but I remember reading in one of Spurgeon's sermons that it required the sight of iniquity sometimes to arouse us to proper activity in behalf of righteousness."

Before the two friends separated Allan Rutledge asked Reginald what impelled him to take the interest he did in social and civic affairs.

"It seems strange to me to see a young man like you throw himself into a fight for the common weal as you are doing," said the minister.

"Do not give me any praise for it," replied the other. "Before I left England I felt this fire in my bones, and over there it meant grief and loss to me. I expect it

may mean the same for me in the new world eventually, but I cannot help it. Unless I am engaged in some such fight life would lose all interest and zest for me."

"He is a strange kind of immigrant," said Allan Rutledge to himself, as he returned to the room after bidding Reginald good-night. "I am afraid he may find his pathway a little rough as I did at first in Wellington."

CHAPTER XV.

A MIDNIGHT TOUR.

It was night. The mantle of darkness covered the city of Bronson and invited everyone to peaceful slumber and rest. Most of the inhabitants of this fair city of Michigan were already enjoying their nightly cup of Lethe's water and in the Elysian fields of sleep were resting from every form of earth's activities. With the exception of here and there a little fever-distressed victim the children were all in dreamland, and many a tired mother had forgotten all her cares under the ministrations of the kindly night.

But at the home of Allan Rutledge, the minister and his wife sat together in the study wide awake. Dr. Rutledge was dressed for the street and his overcoat and hat were in his hands.

"You had better go to bed, dear," the minister was saying. "There is absolutely no danger in this midnight tour of ours. We will have a policeman with us, and we shall do nothing except observe what is taking place in our city under sanction of our city's government."

"I am afraid that in these lawless places some one may hurt you, Allan," answered the wife, with an anxious look. "I don't like this excursion of yours."

"Well, dear, I didn't plan it, you know, but Mr. Nelson almost insisted that I should accompany him. Mr. Townley was anxious to go. He said today that he had been wishing to make a social survey of Bronson by night himself, and he was delighted with the opportunity."

"It may be all right, Allan, but someway I dread it." Mrs. Rutledge shuddered as she spoke.

"Nothing will harm us," responded her husband, confidently. "We are on an errand for our King. I believe myself that Christian people allow evil to prevail as it does largely because they are so ignorant of Satan's devices in our day."

The minister arose to leave. "Good-bye," he said, tenderly to his wife. "Go to bed, and I will let myself in with the night-key. I will be home about one o'clock."

"I shall sit up for you," she answered, firmly. "I cannot sleep while you are away on such an errand as takes you out tonight. Remember I will be praying for you."

Husband and wife kissed each other and Allan Rutledge started out on his way to the Courier office.

It was the night following the visit of Reginald Nelson to the minister's home. That day the plans for the midnight tour of Bronson had been completed. Mr. Townley was enthusiastic and heartily joined in the enterprise. Mr. Marchmount was also in favor of the investigation.

"We need full and accurate information," he declared at a little conference which the investigators held

in the afternoon, "before we can make any charges. We must inform the people exactly what the present city administration stands for, and after that, if you find the facts as they are vaguely reported, we will have no trouble in arousing a reform sentiment, and in electing a reform administration at the fall election."

Mr. Marchmont refused to accompany them, however, pleading his advanced years as an excuse. "If I were as young as I used to be," he said, smilingly, "I would not need a second invitation to join in such a needed investigation, no matter how repulsive it might be. The people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. We will use sane methods in using our information, but the information we must have."

Accompanied by a policeman, who was well versed in the doings of Bronson's night revellers, the party had agreed to start from the Courier office at eleven o'clock. The policeman had been secured by Reginald in some way, but he did not apprise his companions of the secret except to assure them that their guide would be a regular policeman of the city's force. "He will wear his star," said Reginald, explaining to the ministers about the policeman, "and he will be authorized legally to visit every place which we will enter tonight."

Allan Rutledge walked slowly down the street from his home after bidding his wife good-bye. It was a pleasant evening, somewhat warmer than is usual in Michigan during the month of March. A bright moon was shining above the tree tops, its silvery gleams illuminating the city with their mild radiance, too soft to awaken the slumberers but sufficient to guide the steps

of any chance travelers in the night. Fleecy clouds wandered across the sky and above them shone the stars.

"What a beautiful night!" said Allan Rutledge to himself as he walked along enjoying the nocturnal beauties of nature. He gazed reverently towards the heavens, repeating to himself the words of the ancient poet, "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

He remembered also the wonderful verses of Homer in which the Greek poet describes the glories of the useful night.

"Ah, how holy is the night season," he exclaimed aloud. "With the bright beams of 'yon orb'd maiden, with white fire laden, which mortals call the moon'; with those clouds traversing the face of the sky, and yonder stars shining out the love and care of the great Creator, surely the night time is always a season of holy reflection."

Just then he turned a corner and walked along the main street of Bronson, only a few blocks from the business district. In moonlight nights the city lights were never turned on in the residence parts of the town, but the garish electric arc lights shone out every night on the down-town streets until midnight. The brilliant street lights aroused Allan Rutledge from his pleasing reflections on the holiness of the night and called to his mind the mission on which he was about to start.

"Alas, alas," he sighed, wearily; "men profane even

the most sacred things of earth, and night is the time of godless revelry for multitudes."

He recalled to memory the words of John Milton's matchless poem, "Paradise Lost," in which the English poet described the vile god of the heathen night:

"Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood,
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage: and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine."

"The god of some cities in my beloved America," pondered Allan Rutledge, "is Belial and not Christ. Alas, is even Bronson to be excepted?"

Exercised with these painful thoughts, the minister stepped into the Courier office. The others were awaiting his arrival and in a few moments the little company set forth. The policeman-guide was a sturdy Irishman, of powerful build. He carried the customary baton carried by officers and also had a revolver in his belt. His "star," showing his official authority, was hidden by the lapel of his coat, but he could display it in an instant by a slight motion of his left hand.

"We take the saloons first," said the policeman, as they walked down the street, two by two, the officer and Reginald leading. "It is past the closing time, but we can enter readily by a rear door."

Choosing one of the prominent saloons the police officer lead the way to the rear door, and knocked with three double taps. In a little while the door opened carefully. As soon as the door had swung back far enough the officer deftly placed his foot on the threshold and pushed it wide open.

"Who are you, sir?" exclaimed the astonished door tender. For answer the officer showed his star, and the man received him cordially.

"Come in, sir, come in. These are some friends of yours, I suppose?" The saloon man pointed to the ministers and the city reporter of the *Courier* as he spoke.

"Yes," said the officer, curtly. "We want to go into the room where the boys are."

Leading the way, the man took them through a dark room, and throwing open a door, ushered them into a room with a number of men sitting at little tables. On every table there were glasses and bottles.

A bar-tender, with florid face, short, thick neck, and adorned with a white apron, hurried forward.

"Sit down, gentlemen," he said, bowing to the visitors. "What can we do for you tonight?"

The policeman pulled back his coat, showing his star, and remarked leisurely, "Oh, nothing. I am just taking a few friends around tonight to see our town."

The bar-tender looked closely at the men and recognized the ministers and Reginald. He started in astonishment and gaped open-mouthed at the intruders. Meanwhile, Allan Rutledge had been scanning the faces in the room and with a deep sorrow he saw that some of the young men were sons of members of his own church. Suddenly his eyes fell on Roland Gregory at a table in the corner of the room. Seeing that the visitors did not seat themselves the attention of the revellers was soon centered on the party of investigators. The ministers and Reginald had removed their caps, which had been pulled down over their faces, and almost every one recognized them. There was a tense silence. The loud talking and laughing ceased.

"I think that will be all," said Allan Rutledge, speaking to the officer. "We have seen all we care to in this place."

He turned to go.

Roland Gregory staggered to his feet. He was plainly somewhat under the influence of liquor. "What do you fools want here?" he asked in a thick voice, adding a vile oath. The policeman was turning to leave the room and Gregory walked up deliberately to Reginald Nelson, who was writing in a notebook hastily the number of men present, and also adding the names of a few whom he knew.

"What are you writing there?" said Gregory, reaching for the city reporter's notebook. In a moment Reginald whipped his notebook into his pocket, warded off the other's hand, and started to follow the rest.

"You ———," said Gregory, making a lunge at the reporter. Reginald Nelson was glancing over his shoulder as he retreated and he saw the other's threatening fist. Stepping to one side he wheeled around in the doorway, let out his arm with terrific force, and Roland Gregory stretched his length on the floor. There was an instant uproar, a sound of breaking glass, and loud oaths, but the reporter quickly slammed the door shut, and hastily followed the others, who were now passing into the alley out of the rear door.

"That will do for the saloons," said the officer, as he walked out on the main street again. "I could take you to a number of places like that if you cared to go."

"How is it that nobody recognized you, sir?" asked Allan Rutledge, turning to the policeman. "I should think that these saloonmen would know you quicker than they would us, and yet they did not seem to know who you were."

Reginald Nelson laughed, and said, "Our guide is no fool. He is disguised tonight so that even his own wife wouldn't know him. If the city administration were to find out who he is our tour would be comparatively valueless." Allan Rutledge did not quite understand at the time just what Reginald meant, but he had learned to trust the young Englishman's judgment, and he was silent.

They reached a dark street on the edge of the business district and the officer remarked, "We will now have a look at a gambling 'joint.' You can notice how secure these fellows will look when they see my star. They will know that it means no trouble."



"STEPPING TO ONE SIDE HE LET OUT HIS ARM WITH TERRIFIC FORCE, AND ROLAND GREGORY STRETCHED HIS LENGTH ON THE FLOOR."

Allan Rutledge began to see the value of the disguised officer's presence with them.

"Think of it, Mr. Townley," he said to his brother minister. "The fact that this guide of ours is an officer of the law in Bronson assures these divekeepers that the visit means no danger to them. Think of it. Anarchy organized into government here in Bronson. Lawlessness protected by law."

"Hush," cautioned the police officer. They approached a house which looked desolate and deserted from the outside. The policeman knocked with four single taps. There was no response. The knock was repeated. Slowly and more cautiously than in the former instance the door was opened. "Hello, rummy," said the policeman to the fellow at the door, pushing him aside and walking into the hall. The man seemed a little in doubt and tried to shut the door in the officer's face.

"None of that," said the policeman, sternly, pulling a revolver with his right hand, and pulling back his coat with the left.

At the sight of the star the man's confidence was restored and he said, "We have to be mighty careful for a while, as lots of our friends have gone daft since Billy Sunday was here."

Leading the way into the inner room, he ushered the investigators of Bronson's night revelries into a large well-lighted place, fitted up with all the fixtures needed in gambling games. Several of the tables were empty, but there was a fair crowd present.

The policeman seated himself at one of the tables,

motioning to his companions to do likewise, and the four men sat down and gazed around. The door man was somewhat suspicious as he looked at the quartet, especially since he could not recognize the wearer of the star.

"What's your name?" he asked the officer, in a doubtful tone of voice.

"None of your business," was the curt reply.

The men at the tables were so intent on their games that only two or three of them glanced at the new comers. Now and then an oath was heard, but for the most part they were playing in a grim silence, the faces of the gamblers intent.

Allan Rutledge shuddered as he looked at the votaries of America's national sin. He remembered vividly some of the burning words of Mr. Sunday, who knows so well the actual life of the average American. It was during the evangelist's well-known sermon on "Amusements," in which he denounced the modern dance as the mother of harlots and the fashionable card party as the starting point for the gambler. "I am more afraid of your fashionable card party," the evangelist had shouted, "than I am of the bunch in the gamblers' hell. If my boy is not tempted to gamble at a fashionable card party he will never learn from the degenerate, blackleg gamblers in the joint. You have no right to find fault with the city officials," Billy Sunday declared, "if they fail to suppress gambling when a thing so near akin to it is carried on in your own homes. Society, as it is constituted today in America, is doing more to damn

the spiritual life of the churches than all the grogshops and dives in the land."

The door tender was becoming very uncomfortable. He saw Reginald Nelson making notes, and his fears were finally confirmed when one of the players, happening to look towards the four men, exclaimed, "What are those —— preachers doing here?"

"Speilers, speilers," yelled the fellow, arousing the players and pointing to the investigators.

A number of guns flashed in the hands of the startled men, and Allan Rutledge feared that there was danger. He was about to speak to the excited gamblers when the policeman carelessly threw the lapel of his coat back and cried, "Shut up, sir, or I will have your 'joint' pulled. Don't you know this star tells you that we are all right? If you treat officers like this we will raise the rent on you."

The policeman arose and the others with him, and they made for the door. Allan Rutledge was the last to pass out. As he was shutting the door the crack of a gun was heard, and a bullet splintered the top of the door. The little party proceeded hastily to the street, the policeman hurrying in front. "A lot of cut-throats in that gang," he declared. "This is one of the 'joints' that ought to be closed in the interests of public safety."

Allan Rutledge was getting sick at heart. "I have seen enough for one night," said the minister, as they were walking down the street.

"You were not hurt, were you?" asked Reginald, quickly.

"No, no," he responded. "The bullet went wild.

They evidently meant only to frighten us. I was not hurt physically, but I am hurt in my soul. I did not believe that it was possible such lawlessness could flourish under the protection of our American flag."

"Alas, sir," said Reginald, "you little know how low political ideals have dropped in recent years. Let us make one more visit and then we shall conclude our tour."

The policeman led them to a part of the town which had formerly been the site of several palatial homes, but the inroads of the factories had driven the fashionable residents to other parts of the city. A few of the houses still stood in the midst of a district given over to large manufacturing plants. Going to one of these houses the officer knocked.

"What is this?" asked Allan Rutledge.

"A gilded hall of vice," responded the policeman.

The minister hesitated. He felt inclined to rush from the door of the house of death, but his devotion to duty kept him with the rest.

"Isn't this a horrible nightmare," whispered Mr. Townley. "I well knew such iniquities existed as we have seen, but the actual sight has appalled and sickened me."

Just then the large door of the house opened and the four men stepped into the hall. As he did so the policeman flashed his star again, and the woman who admitted them smiled and bowed. A door was opened, they gazed on a surprising scene of luxury. The room was large and magnificent chandeliers shed a brilliant light over the company gathered there. The furniture, the

oriental rugs, the pictures and the statuary were of the richest and most expensive sort. Banks of flowers adorned one corner of the apartment. The couches and chairs offered a luxurious resting place. Seated at a piano a girl was playing soft music, which mingled harmoniously with the tinkling of glasses from which a number of the well-dressed patrons of the place were drinking. Ministering to the flesh in most suggestive ways girls mingled with men, dressed in glittering evening dresses.

Allan Rutledge gazed for a moment stunned at the brilliance of the tinselled and enticing display of sin at its very worst. "My God," he groaned, as in torture, "Can such things be?"

He turned and staggered from the room. Reginald Nelson quickly followed, and then came Mr. Townley and the policeman. The startled roisterers gazed at the disappearing company in fear, but they were soon reassured by the woman who had admitted them. "One of the men had a star on, and it is all right," she said.

"I must go home," said Allan Rutledge, hoarsely, when they had reached the streets. "I can bear no more. Poor, deluded victims," he continued, "they know not that the dead are there, and that the guests of the strange woman are in the depths of hell."

In silence the little company made their way to the Courier office. The Irish policeman removed his skillful disguise, and Allan Rutledge saw that he was not an Irishman at all, but a Hollander with whom he was acquainted, one of the members of the police force of Bronson.

The policeman slipped away, and the three friends sat in silence for a few moments. "We now have the information we desired. We are witnesses of the actual conditions fostered by Bud McCrea's policy." It was Reginald Nelson who spoke. Allan Rutledge aroused himself. "Bronson shall be clean," he exclaimed, almost fiercely. "Let us think over what we have seen and heard for a few days and then we can formulate a plan of campaign."

In a short time the three men separated, and Allan Rutledge walked slowly and sadly to his home.

The moon was still shining in its silver splendor, and the clouds were hurrying still across the sky, while above them all twinkled the thousands of stars which adorn the heavens.

But there was no longer any beauty in the night for Allan Rutledge. His soul revolted in bitterness from the display of Bronson's guilty fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

At the door of his home his wife met him. "I am glad you are back safely," she said, softly.

"I have been in hell," answered her husband, grasping her hand. "Thank God, a work has begun in Bronson that shall wipe out its hell."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GANG.

The report of the strange tour of the self-appointed investigators spread consternation amongst the "gang" who were in charge of the city administration of Bronson. Both the resort-keepers and the habitués of the dives brought the news the next day to Bud McCrea. He hurriedly called on the mayor for an explanation.

"I hear you detailed a policeman last night to accompany those preachers and that fool reporter on a slumming trip," said McCrea, angrily.

The mayor looked surprised and retorted quickly, "What's that?"

"Did you not detail an officer to accompany a party last night who were sneaking around town?" McCrea was plainly excited as he asked this question.

"I know nothing about it," said the mayor. "Tell me what has happened?"

Bud McCrea then told of the midnight tour of Dr. Rutledge, Mr. Townley and Reginald Nelson, and of the presence of a policeman with them.

"The man surely had a star on his coat. He must have been a fake policeman. If that is so we will get even with that crowd of Billy Sunday dreamers if they try to make any trouble."

The chief of police also denied any knowledge of an officer acting as guide in Bronson's underworld, and the affair was a good deal of a mystery.

"I fear there is a traitor in the camp," said Bud McCrea, after he had interviewed a number of the city officials and could get no clue to the identity of the man.

During the next week the columns of the *Courier* were eagerly scanned by McCrea and his friends to see if Reginald Nelson would publish a report of the investigation.

Knowing that they had lost all influence over Mr. Marchmount the "gang" did not approach him, but incidentally he was warned again about the danger to himself if his paper made any exposures which would reflect on the reputation of any of McCrea's friends.

Meanwhile, the investigators had been slowly formulating their plan of campaign. Allan Rutledge took the lead in the matter.

"Let us give the present city administration an opportunity to clear itself," he urged, speaking one day at a conference of the leading Christian men of Bronson, to whom a full report of the midnight tour was given.

It was agreed that a number of them should present themselves at a meeting of the city council and demand immediate reform measures to control the saloons and to eliminate the vicious resorts.

The city council was meeting the next evening at the city hall. There was nothing but routine business and several of the members of the council were absent. Suddenly the door of the room opened and a crowd of

well-known citizens filed into the room. Amongst them were Edgar Prince, the manufacturer, who had been converted in the tabernacle meetings; George Caldwell, Thomas Marchmont, Reginald Nelson, Mr. Cameron, and a number of ministers, including Mr. Townley and Allan Rutledge. Allan Rutledge acted as spokesman for the company.

"We have come here tonight," the minister began, addressing the astounded mayor, "to demand immediate reform in the matter of the saloons and dives in Bronson. We have evidence that the illegal liquor selling and the illegal and demoralizing resorts which disgrace our city are running under the protection of the city administration. We demand a change of policy in regard to this whole matter as the majority of the people of Bronson are now opposed to this policy of lawlessness and anarchy."

The mayor stared speechless at the speaker, and then gazed helplessly at the crowd which filled the council-room. At last one of the more aggressive members of the council found his voice.

"We deny that the policy of the present city administration in Bronson has been one of lawlessness and anarchy," he exclaimed, arising from his seat, and acting as spokesman for the council.

"We are ready to prove our allegations," responded the minister. "We have witnesses who will give you the names and places where the law is openly violated every night in Bronson, and the presence of a policeman in these places gives security to the lawbreakers instead of terrorizing them."

The councilman well knew of the investigating tour, and he feared an open exposure of conditions if he persisted in his remarks and so he sat down in some confusion. One of the socialist members of the council then arose and addressed the company. "We well know," he said, "that many things have been going on in our city which are a disgrace to civilization. I do not now refer to our industrial system of tyranny, but to violations of all law and decency. We are opposed to these things, but we have been in the minority. I move that this council take the request of this delegation of our citizens into consideration, and that the matter be discussed at a full meeting of the aldermen of Bronson."

The majority of the council, being friendly to McCrea, would like to have dismissed the matter more unceremoniously, but they began to see that they were dealing with a different Bronson from the careless, indifferent and morally blind city which had existed before the epoch-making meetings in the tabernacle. The motion of the socialist was seconded by his fellow-socialists, and it passed unanimously, although it was plain that there was not much animation in the voting on the part of a majority.

Allan Rutledge thanked the council for their action, but declared that it would take more than a mere resolution to satisfy the awakened civic conscience of the citizenship.

"We shall return in a week," he declared, "to see what progress you have made in cleaning up our city."

A day or two after the invasion of the council cham-

ber, Mr. Graham called at the home of the pastor of the Central Church. He found Allan Rutledge in his study. The minister greeted him with sincere cordiality for the two men were still personal friends.

"Dr. Rutledge, I have called to see you at the request of a number of prominent members and friends of our church. Your recent actions in regard to the slums of Bronson have aroused a good deal of antagonism to you amongst some of our best people."

"You refer to my actions in co-operation with the leading Christian men of Bronson whereby we are seeking to rid our city of its legalized anarchy," said the minister, smilingly.

The lawyer frowned darkly and responded with some asperity, "There is no legalized anarchy in Bronson, sir. It is not right for you, a comparative stranger in this place, to slander our city in such a manner."

"Pardon me, Mr. Graham, but if you like I can give you the exact location of illegal resorts which are running every night in Bronson in direct violation of the laws of our state and the ordinances of our city. These places are now protected, for a price, by our city administration, and this thing is a curse which must be removed."

Allan Rutledge, as was his custom when he became aroused, rose to his feet and looked down at the lawyer.

"Sit down, sit down, Dr. Rutledge," said the lawyer, impatiently. "There is no use in getting excited over this matter. Do you not know that the usages to which you refer are common in every metropolitan city in America? Bronson is not a provincial town as your

Wellington was in Iowa. Bronson is a metropolitan city."

As he spoke these last words Mr. Graham straightened himself up in his chair and looked at the minister with an air of injured dignity.

Allan Rutledge sat down slowly and then turned to his visitor and spoke earnestly; "Let us not get confused, Mr. Graham. I am not denying that Bronson is a metropolitan city, but I do deny absolutely that the majority of the voters of Bronson are in favor of these illegal dives and demoralizing resorts. More than that, the majority of the voters in Bronson have the right to dictate the policies of this city. Our fathers died to give them this right. If the present city administration, which now misrepresents this majority, refuses to do our will, we propose to hurl them from power and elect a reform administration which will clean up our town."

"A pious imagination," responded the lawyer, shrugging his shoulders. "This hope of a reform city is only a dream, I assure you, Dr. Rutledge. You are wasting your time and hurting your spiritual influence in devoting your time to such matters. Is it not your business to preach the Gospel and leave such things to us?"

Allan Rutledge paused a moment before replying and then responded slowly, "I have been preaching the Gospel to you, Mr. Graham, as earnestly as I know how to do it, but you still remain rebellious to Jesus Christ. I have been anxious to have a talk with you in

regard to this very matter and I am glad you introduced it."

The lawyer looked uncomfortable as the minister began to speak in this way but Allan Rutledge continued with increasing seriousness, "Will you not, Mr. Graham, here and now confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord? I freely admit my work is to preach the Gospel, and I am only starting this crusade for righteousness in civic affairs. I am going to leave it altogether in the hands of Reginald Nelson, Edgar Prince and some others and take up anew my spiritual duties for I well know that spiritual regeneration must precede moral reformation in the individual and in the community."

Mr. Graham was impressed with the earnestness of the minister but he had not expected the conversation to take this turn. He was unable to find words to reply, and the other spoke again. "I think that if you were to surrender your life to God, Mr. Graham, you would soon see that you are losing your influence and destroying your usefulness in Bronson by defending the actions of such men as McCrea. You have hinted that I ought to preach the Gospel. Will you not now yourself obey the Gospel?"

Allan Rutledge spoke his question in a pleading voice and looked into the face of Joy Graham's father with eager longing.

"I did not come here to discuss this matter," he said, with a little impatience.

"But this is the most important matter that you and I could possibly discuss," said Dr. Rutledge, earnestly.

"Your daughter, Joy, has spoken to me more than once of her prayers for your conversion, and it would rejoice the heart of your family if you were to begin to live the Christian life."

Mr. Graham arose to his feet. "I think I am leading as good a life as the majority of your church members, sir," he answered, stiffly. "I called to give you some good advice which might hinder a request for your resignation being brought before our congregation."

"I sincerely thank you for your interest in me," said the other, "but I regret exceedingly that you cannot see your way clear to accept the Christian faith as it will mean that you can no longer serve as a trustee in Central Church after our congregational meeting the week after next."

"What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Graham, turning angrily to the minister.

"I mean just what I say," responded Allan Rutledge. "Since the spiritual awakening which our church has enjoyed in consequence of the tabernacle meetings the membership have been discussing the advisability of having no one in office in the church unless they are believers, and as you are an unbeliever your usefulness in Central Church is over unless you repent."

"We will see about that," snapped Mr. Graham, walking out of the house without even wishing the minister good day.

"Poor man," said Allan to himself. "I regret his blindness for his own sake and also for the sake of his family."

When Mr. Graham began to enquire amongst his friends in Central Church he found that the minister's warning was true, and that there had been set on foot a plan to deprive him of his trusteeship in Central Church and place Edgar Prince in his place. Edgar Prince had united with Central Church at the close of the tabernacle meetings and was now a most earnest member. One of the leaders in this movement was Mr. Cameron. "I never could see the sense in giving the leadership in our church to unbelievers," said the Scotchman on one occasion. "I like Mr. Graham personally and I think his wife and daughter are among the best members we have, but he himself makes no pretensions of faith, and it is a disgrace to confess that we have not men enough in our church to elect as trustees, but that we must go out into the world to find them."

When the lawyer found how hopeless his case was, and how differently things were from what they had been before the advent of Allan Rutledge and the visit of Mr. Sunday to Bronson, he bitterly regretted having had any hand in the transference of the Iowa minister to Michigan. He spoke to his wife and daughter, telling them they would have to leave the church if they failed to re-elect him as a trustee, but they took the side of Mr. Cameron, and Joy spoke very plainly to her father. "Since you do not believe in Christ I should not think you would wish to be an officer in His church," she declared, stoutly. She sought to win her father to the Christian faith just as Allan Rutledge had done, but the lawyer's heart was getting very bitter

towards Allan Rutledge and the Christian leaders in the community. "The more I see of these Christian fanatics the less I like them," he sneered.

The visit of the delegation of prominent citizens to the city council demanding a reform administration brought a crisis in the affairs of Bud McCrea. He summoned a conference in Mr. Graham's office, and a number of the old leaders in the city's politics gathered for a council of war.

Amongst those present were Mr. Graham, Roland Gregory, the mayor, Bud McCrea, and some of the members of the city council. Another prominent member of the conference was Ned Rowlands, a young fellow who had been Bud McCrea's right-hand man for some time previously.

"Is there any way we can drive that fellow, Rutledge, out of town?" asked McCrea, during the discussion of the unsettled conditions in Bronson's political world. "How is it, Graham?" he asked, turning to the lawyer. "You run that Central Church. Can't you send that fanatic about his business?"

The lawyer shook his head and frowned. "The members of Central Church have gone daft about Rutledge," he exclaimed, bitterly. "I am thinking of leaving them altogether."

"The man who is at the bottom of all our trouble is not Rutledge," interposed Roland Gregory. "If we can get control of the Courier and drive out of Bronson that English mut, Nelson, we can soon get things settled again."

This view was agreed to by several of the men, especially Ned Rowlands.

"I think I have a plan," said Mr. Graham, speaking in a low voice. He looked around the company of men anxiously. "I want to be sure we can count on every man present," he explained, "before I tell my plan of procedure."

He then outlined in detail his plans to get possession of the Courier, and turn it back to its old custom of supporting the McCrea policies in Bronson.

"The press is the real power in the political world," said Mr. Graham. "We need not be afraid of Rutledge if we can control the Courier. The success of those —— tabernacle meetings was due mostly to the work of the Courier."

The scheme outlined by Mr. Graham pleased the conference immensely. "That will fix Nelson for good," said Roland Gregory, rubbing his hands as he heard his prospective father-in-law explain his dark device.

"We can get around Mr. Marchmount if you offer him a proposition like that," said McCrea, when Mr. Graham had finished. The lawyer's project proposed the blackening of the name of Reginald Nelson, as his eager advocacy of the people's cause was most bitterly resented by some of the industrial magnates as well as by the politicians of the McCrea type.

"We will do with him," said Mr. Graham, "as the eagle does with the turtle. We will carry him just as high as we can in order that his fall may be all the more severe. Remember," he cautioned the others,

"let us make no report of any stories about the young fellow until we get him just where we want him."

In addition to ending the career of Reginald Nelson in Bronson they planned to acquire control over the *Courier* by offering Mr. Marchmount a large bonus for his majority of the shares of stock in the company controlling the paper. "We will tempt Mr. Marchmount to sell the paper by agreeing to make Reginald Nelson the editor as his successor," said Mr. Graham, "and then we will sell some stock to Nelson, enough to get him badly in debt. We will let him imagine he is editor for a month or two, and then we can pull our strings and throw him out, and start the stories. That will be the end of the *Englishman*."

The cunning and astute mind of Mr. Graham had planned for every detail of the scheme, and the conference broke up with an assurance of success in the minds of all the conspirators.

"Won't I be glad to see the last of that fellow, Nelson," said Roland Gregory as he walked back to his factory from the conference. "I would like to begin scattering those stories about him now."

Until the "gang" could get control of the *Courier* and destroy Reginald Nelson they planned to feign complete surrender to the forces of reform, and at the next council meeting wordy resolutions for immediate enforcement of the laws were passed.

The Christian leaders in Bronson were jubilant, and all fondly hoped that the battle was over, and that the city's moral and spiritual progress was now assured.

"It has been a great victory," said Reginald Nelson to Mr. Marchmount as they discussed the sudden collapse of all opposition to reform. "Even the politicians are beginning to see that the people are the real rulers and that the policies of the leaders must appeal to the people."

"I believe your work on the *Courier* has had a good deal to do with the success of our cause," responded Mr. Marchmount. "If I were a younger man I would inaugurate some new policies in connection with my paper that would make it a moral force in Bronson second only to the pulpit."

"A newspaper to-day moulds the political sentiments of the people a great deal more than the pulpit," said Reginald. "The mission of the newspaper is different, as it deals with the external life, but the spiritual life inculcated by the pulpit is of little avail unless it finds expression in the practical life of the world."

"You are quite a preacher, Reginald," said his employer, jokingly.

The only man in Bronson who did not rejoice at the victory of reform was Allan Rutledge. "It is too quick and too complete a change of front to be genuine," he said to his wife, after he had read the report of the council meeting and the speech of the mayor. "Moral reformation depends on spiritual regeneration, and there has been no spiritual regeneration of the 'gang' as far as I can see. I am reminded of the old proverb, 'I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts.' I will keep my eyes open for I feel sure that this reform measure by our city council is an empty sham."

But the minister did not dampen the ardor of his associates and Edgar Prince and Reginald Nelson rejoiced greatly, assured that righteousness and decency had completely triumphed. The events of the next few weeks seemed to convince Reginald that morning had come and that his day had dawned.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW EDITOR.

"Good morning, Mr. Marchmount, I have not seen you for a few days."

"No, Mr. Graham, I have been confined to the house the last day or two. I am beginning to feel my age, although I don't like to confess that I am an old man."

Mr. Graham had sauntered into the office of the *Courier* one morning a week or so after the conference of the McCrea supporters. He had heard of the illness of the editor and he felt that the time was propitious to broach the subject of the sale of the *Courier*.

"You need a good rest, my friend," rejoined Mr. Graham. "Why don't you give up work for a year and take a good trip to Europe? It will add ten years to your life."

"I have been thinking sometimes that I ought to take a real vacation," responded the editor wearily.

"The *Courier* has had a successful career and you are now well able to retire. Would you care to sell out?"

"Sell out?" The editor repeated the words quickly and looked at Mr. Graham.

"Yes. You know there are always people looking

for a good investment and your newspaper is considered a paying venture."

"It is more prosperous at present than ever before. That young Englishman, Mr. Nelson, has been successful above all my hopes in making the paper popular with the great mass of working men who are so numerous in Bronson. When a paper has a list of subscribers like the *Courier* it is easy to get advertising contracts which make a newspaper pay."

"What kind of an editor-in-chief would Mr. Nelson make?" asked Mr. Graham, in matter-of-fact tones.

"He could take my place tomorrow and make the *Courier* one of the most influential papers in southern Michigan in less than a year," replied Mr. Marchmount, with enthusiasm. "I can't understand where the boy gets his knowledge of the business. He must have had some experience in England, but it is strange how quiet he keeps about his own private life in the old country. Mr. Nelson is a good deal of a mystery to me."

"Well, in America, you know we ask no questions about the immigrants after they pass the customs officers of New York. We mark them all one hundred and if they discount that it must be by their record here. Mr. Nelson has had a good record in Bronson as we all know."

Mr. Graham looked benevolently at the editor as he spoke. Before Mr. Marchmount could make any reply the lawyer continued, "Seriously, Mr. Marchmount, I have a friend who would like to buy some of the stock of your company just as an investment, and I

think if he got control that we could arrange to make Mr. Nelson the editor as my word would go a long way with him."

Mr. Marchmount was interested. "Have you any proposition to make me?" he asked Mr. Graham.

The lawyer had carefully figured out the amount of stock which he desired to purchase in order to control the policy of the *Courier*, and he answered promptly. "Yes, I can make you an offer right now, if you care to entertain it."

"What is your offer?"

Mr. Graham drew his chair nearer to the editor's desk and told him how much money he was instructed to invest. "You now own ninety per cent. of the stock yourself," said the lawyer. "I am ready to purchase seventy-five per cent of it at the market value. If Mr. Nelson should be chosen as editor we would wish to see him interested in the paper to the extent of the other fifteen per cent."

"I am afraid the young man could not make an investment of that amount at present. He has told me that he has no capital at present. I am assured he must be a member of some wealthy English family, but he came out to America with very little money."

"He will not need to trouble about that," answered Mr. Graham. "We will arrange to take his note for the amount of the stock, and with the earnings of the paper the stock will soon pay for itself."

"I will think this matter over and have a talk with Mr. Nelson," said Mr. Marchmount, finally, and Mr. Graham withdrew, well satisfied with his progress.

On his way to his office the lawyer met Reginald Nelson hurrying to the Courier building.

"What is your hurry this morning?" said Mr. Graham, stopping and reaching out his hand cordially to Reginald.

The young man was amazed at the kindly reception as he imagined that Joy's father would be his bitter personal enemy after recent events. He shook hands with Mr. Graham somewhat mechanically without making any response.

"You young men have won the day in Bronson," said the lawyer, smilingly. "We old fogies thought that these new ideas of reform were too advanced, but it is evident that this is the day of the young man."

"I am glad to hear you commend the victory of the reform elements in Bronson," said Reginald Nelson, finding his voice. "We hope that the city administration will soon be convinced that they have made no mistake in bending to the will of the majority."

"The Courier is getting a good deal of the credit for the victory," said Mr. Graham, in a patronizing kind of voice, "and Mr. Marchmont tells me that you are the real power back of the Courier."

It was natural for a young man like Reginald Nelson to be highly flattered by these words from Mr. Graham. He imagined that the lawyer had capitulated completely to the new order of things, and that henceforth Mr. Graham would be the friend and supporter of the reform policies.

"Thank you," he responded, gracefully, lifting his hat and inclining his head slightly forward.

"I have a little matter of business to talk over with you, Mr. Nelson," continued the other. "Could you come to our house for dinner this evening at six o'clock?"

"I—I shall be glad to do so, sir," responded Reginald, somewhat confused.

"All right," said the lawyer, waving his hand, and walking away. "We shall look for you. Good-by."

In a deep quandary Reginald Nelson walked slowly to the newspaper office.

He could not fathom the entire change of front on the part of Mr. Graham.

"I have not been at his home since the eventful night when the Tourist Club visited London," he said to himself. "What a fool I was in those days! How far away they seem to me now."

Arriving at the Courier office, he was called into consultation at once by Mr. Marchmont, who related to him the conversation he had just had with Mr. Graham.

"That accounts for it," said Reginald, when he heard of Mr. Graham's offer which might involve his promotion to the editorship of the Courier. "I met Mr. Graham a few blocks down the street and he spoke to me more cordially than he has ever done before in his life and invited me to his house to talk over some business. He asked me to dine with him this evening."

"Mr. Nelson, the opportunity of your life has come. For so young a man the position of editor of this

paper would be remarkable. You must have had some years of experience in England, did you not?"

"I had bitter years of experience, I admit," said the other, his eyes getting moist, "but I see they are yielding me the fruit of success now. I have had my ups and downs in life, I tell you, and a good many more downs than ups." Mr. Marchmount noticed the emotion with which his companion spoke, and he wondered still more what was in those hidden years in England.

That evening Reginald Nelson appeared at the Cameron home at five o'clock.

"What is the matter, Reginald?" asked Mrs. Cameron, anxiously. The two good Scotch people now looked on their boarder as a member of their family and treated him like a son.

"I have been invited to Mr. Graham's for dinner to-night, Auntie," he replied. "He wants to see me on some important business. I may surprise you some day by showing myself to be a big man in Bronson."

He spoke these words jokingly to Mrs. Cameron, but the good lady answered in earnest tones, "You're a big man in Bronson already, Reginald. Dr. Rutledge told Mr. Cameron the other day that your influence through the Courier was second only to that of Mr. Sunday in cleaning up Bronson."

A little before six o'clock Reginald knocked at the door of the Graham home. It was opened by Joy, who was evidently expecting him. "We are glad to see you, Mr. Nelson," she said, pleasantly. "Papa

told us you were coming to dinner. It is a long time since you have been at our house."

In a few moments Mrs. Graham also appeared and welcomed the young man cordially. While they were waiting for Mr. Graham, who had not yet arrived from downtown, Reginald and the mother and daughter talked of their first meeting on board the Neptune. "It seems a long, long time ago to me," said the immigrant, "although it is really less than a year ago."

"You have been doing well since coming to Bronson," said Mrs. Graham. "I hope you have not been disappointed in America."

"Not altogether," he replied, lightly. Then turning to the lady, with a serious face, he said earnestly, "The best thing I have done since coming to Bronson was the step I took in Billy Sunday's meetings when I became a Christian."

"We have always thought you were a Christian," responded Mrs. Graham, quickly.

"No, no," he answered. "I was far from being a Christian. I may have possessed some pagan virtues, but the inner life and light which the Christian enjoys were unknown to me until Mr. Sunday gave me a new vision of what life is."

"Try to influence Mr. Graham and Roland in that direction," said Mrs. Graham. "We cannot understand—"

At that moment the door opened and Mr. Graham appeared.

"Good-evening, Mr. Nelson," he exclaimed, greet-

ing the young man with a cordiality which surprised both his wife and daughter.

During the dinner Reginald Nelson enjoyed himself. He had shared little in social amenities during the past few months, and his nature craved for them. He had now completely conquered his foolish sentiments for Joy Graham, as he had learned to call them, and he met her with the openness and frankness of a brother, looking on her just as he would on a young married woman. Joy noticed the marvellous development in his character since the days when, like a boy, he had entertained her on the deck of the ocean liner. She felt a growing respect for him and was overjoyed as she heard her father propose to elevate him to the editor's chair in the Courier office.

After the dinner Reginald and Mr. Graham retired to the library where he wished to complete his conversation with the young man in regard to the business proposition.

"Have a cigar, Mr. Nelson," said Mr. Graham, handing his companion an expensive cigar.

"Thank you, I do not smoke."

"Don't smoke!" exclaimed Mr. Graham; "I thought every Englishman from the king down smoked tobacco."

The young man smiled and responded, "A good many do enjoy burning incense to King Nicotine, but for health reasons I gave up the habit."

"Is your health poor?" asked Mr. Graham, quickly. "You do not look like an invalid."

"My health is excellent and I want to keep it so,"

said Reginald. "A man needs all his energies in these days and I found tobacco made me less 'fit' than when I abstained from its use."

Mr. Graham outlined to the young Englishman his plans for the *Courier*.

"I fear I cannot purchase the stock at present," said Reginald, hesitatingly, when this part of the proposition was presented to him.

"That will be an essential part of the deal," responded Mr. Graham. "You can see, Mr. Nelson, that my friend, having his money invested in this newspaper, naturally wants an editor who is also financially interested in the enterprise."

With much reluctance Reginald agreed to sign a note for the price of fifteen shares of stock.

Before he left Mr. Graham's house it was practically decided that the stock of Mr. Marchmont should be purchased by Mr. Graham's friend and Reginald.

"Who is this friend of yours?" asked Reginald, abruptly, just before he arose to leave.

"He desires to remain incog. for the present," said the lawyer, evasively. "I am acting as his trustee."

In a few days the change of editors was made and the *Courier* appeared with the name of Reginald Nelson as editor. Reginald had made it plain that he was to be allowed to conduct the paper exactly as he deemed best, and he emphasized the fact that the devotion of the *Courier* to reform issues would probably be strengthened instead of diminished.

"We well know your stand on those matters," Mr.

Graham had said, "and if we had not desired an editor who stood for reforms we would not have asked you to assume charge of the newspaper."

In the first issue on which his name appeared as editor, Reginald placed a verse of Scripture above the editorial column, and his first editorial was headed, in leaded type, "Our Ambition."

In this article he declared that the policy of the *Courier* would be "to awaken society to its duty to its members; to scourge out of the temple of politics the wretched vassals of greed who have prostituted their offices and betrayed the people; to encourage men of clean minds and strong hearts to serve their fellow-men for the glory of that service."

Bud McCrea and Mr. Graham smiled deprecatingly as they read the editorial together in the latter's law office.

"Ned Rowlands will see to it that he doesn't interfere with affairs in Bronson that are not meant for the public," said Bud McCrea.

Ned Rowlands had been given the position of city reporter at the request of Mr. Graham. At the time of his selection for the position Reginald did not know the young man, but he soon learned that he was an old friend of Bud McCrea's, and he was not quite satisfied with his work as city reporter. He seemed to gather only commonplace news, and the vital reports of the city's actual happenings on street and in factories became fewer and fewer. Mr. Graham, however, insisted that Ned be retained as reporter,

and the young editor began to feel the limitations of his position.

"Isn't it just fine to see how Reginald Nelson is pushing his way to the front." Vivian Derwent spoke these words to Joy Graham one day as the two girls were visiting at Joy's home.

"Yes," answered Joy, enthusiastically. "You know it was through papa that he was given the editorship. Papa is quite interested in the management of the *Courier* himself now, and I am glad of it for I was afraid he would feel so badly about being left off the Board of Trustees of our church. He seems to be more interested in the newspaper than he ever was in the church."

"I think the rule they made that no one should be an officer of the church unless they are members is a good one, but I was sorry to see your father refuse to become a member," said Vivian.

A little later the conversation of the two girls turned again to Reginald Nelson, and Vivian said shyly, "If I tell you something, will you keep it a secret."

"I surely will," promised Joy Graham, opening her eyes wide and wondering what the secret might be.

"I believe I am in love with Reginald Nelson," said Vivian, bashfully. "You know he comes out to see father occasionally, and he and I have driven back and forth together several times, and he is just such a dandy fellow."

"Do you think he cares anything for you?" asked Joy.

"He is always pleasant to me, and he seems to enjoy my company," responded the other, "but he has never said anything to me about love. You know Englishmen are very reserved. They are so different from the American young men."

"Such as George Caldwell, for example," laughed Joy Graham.

"Yes," said Vivian, looking serious. "George is always protesting his love to me, and he wants me to become engaged. I think I might like George all right if I had not met Reginald."

"Oh, leave Reginald alone," responded Joy, brusquely. "George is just dying of love for you, and you have always known him. I thought you were engaged once."

"Oh, that was long ago when I was just a child," replied Vivian, tossing her head. "He tried to keep me to that engagement the other day, but I told him it was a woman's privilege to change her mind. You never changed your mind, did you, Joy?" she continued. "You and Roland have been engaged for a long time. When is your wedding?"

Vivian noticed the utter lack of enthusiasm shown by her friend as Joy answered, "The day has been set for October the twentieth."

"Why, what's the matter? You would think you were announcing the day of your funeral instead of your wedding."

Joy Graham did not answer farther in regard to her wedding and changed the subject of their conversation.

The subject of her marriage to Roland Gregory was

becoming one of anxiety to Joy Graham. She began to doubt if she really felt towards the young manufacturer as a wife ought to feel towards a husband. She had mentioned her doubts one day to her father, but he had treated her rather severely.

"It is too late now, Joy, to change your mind. The engagement has been announced, and I have made some business engagements with Roland on the strength of your marriage to him. Why, does not your Christian religion teach you to keep your word, and have you not pledged your word to Roland?"

"But people break engagements," the daughter had urged.

"Of course, they do," her father answered with some heat, "and people break their marriage vows, and people break the laws of God and man, but I thought Christianity taught people to keep pledges."

This conversation made Joy Graham decide to abide by her former pledge to Roland Gregory that she would be his wife, but as time passed and his habits became more dissipated she felt estranged from him more and more.

At last she went to her mother, but Mrs. Graham well knew her husband's position in the matter, and she sought to encourage Joy's fading attachment to her girlhood friend. "You used to think there was no one in the world but Roland," said her mother.

"But Roland has changed," pleaded Joy. "We do not agree on anything hardly. I am afraid a marriage to him will only be a mockery."

"Poor Roland will surely be lost unless you save him," said Mrs. Graham.

This argument conquered Joy and she began to cultivate anew her regard for the man to whom she had plighted her troth. The day of the wedding had been set, but she put it as far off as possible. Her health began to suffer from the conflicting emotions in her soul, and her spirits languished. But she saw her duty now to be the salvation of Roland and she girded herself for the necessary sacrifice,

CHAPTER XVIII.

INDEPENDENCE DAY.

The citizens of Bronson were preparing for a glorious celebration on Independence Day. For weeks the business men and factories had been working on floats, banners and street decorations, and when July the Fourth dawned it found the Michigan city ready to greet it in a way which would have done honor to the largest cities in the land. A number of the more public-spirited citizens, led by Edgar Prince, George Edwards, Mr. Marchmount, and others like-minded, had charge of the celebration and they spared no efforts to make it a great occasion. Allan Rutledge had been engaged to make the oration at the park, following the monster parade.

Both Reginald Nelson and Allan Rutledge were also preparing to make Independence Day a memorable one that year in Bronson. As the weeks had passed it became more and more apparent to these two men that the city administration had been altogether insincere in their professions of reform, and that the civic evils which had spread their cancerous infection throughout the city for years were more active than ever. In vain Reginald sought to arouse Ned Rowlands to his task as city reporter. The young fellow

seemed blind, and reported to Reginald that the police were enforcing the laws without fear or favor. There was almost an open rupture between Mr. Graham and the young editor in regard to Rowlands, Reginald claiming that he was incompetent and the lawyer insisting that he must be retained on the staff of the newspaper. Finally, Mr. Townley, Dr. Rutledge and the editor held a conference in regard to civic conditions. It was agreed to bring a detective to the city to find out just what was going on and get the required evidence which was needed in order that there might be a complete public exposure of the treachery of the city administration. The detective came and in a short time had gathered enough evidence to convince Reginald that no attack he could make on the city administration would be too severe.

Meanwhile, the circulation of the *Courier* was falling off. People were losing confidence in it. The presence of Ned Rowlands on the staff was discouraging to many of the radical reformers. Reginald Nelson felt that his position was becoming unbearable, and he decided on a bold stroke of policy which would make him free as an editor and put an immediate close to a condition of things which were intolerable to him.

The young editor knew nothing of the schemes of the conspirators who were now confident that they had Reginald in their grasp. They planned in a very short time to take advantage of the falling subscription list of the *Courier* to unceremoniously oust the budding editor from his chair, and follow up this blow by circulating stories defaming his character, and

also by beginning action in the courts for the immediate payment of the notes which Reginald Nelson had signed in payment for his stock in the Courier.

The evening before the Fourth Allan Rutledge and Reginald were closeted together in the private office of the editor.

"I have a complete list of the illegal and vicious resorts which are open every night," said Reginald, holding a paper in his hand, "and I also have a list giving the names of the property holders who are receiving rent from these lawbreakers."

"And your plan is to give all your information to the public?" The minister spoke slowly and deliberately.

"Precisely," answered the other, promptly. "I feel there will be no danger of advertising these resorts by publishing their locations, as I am fully convinced that the issue of the Courier tomorrow will mean the elimination of this evil from Bronson for a time, at least."

"And you will publish the names of the property holders also?" responded Allan Rutledge.

"Certainly. It is the privilege of a newspaper to make public such information at any time."

"Let me see the list of the property holders," said the minister.

He took a paper from Reginald's hand and glanced over it.

"Isn't this an awful record?" he exclaimed. "Why, here are some of our leading capitalists in Bronson. What can they mean by renting property for such vile uses?"

"Oh, that is a simple proposition," replied the

editor. "I discovered the secret of such things while I was still in England. Reputable business would only pay an interest of from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent., but these resorts pay an interest on the investment of 15 per cent. to 30 per cent."

"It is a mere matter then of sordid gain," said Allan Rutledge, in disgust.

"That is all," replied the editor. "Capital asks for nothing but interest. It cares not for God nor man."

"Go ahead," said the minister, with a stern look on his face. "Make your editorial and your exposure as complete and radical as you can make it. In my speech in the park I will refer to your paper, and demand that the citizens of Bronson declare another revolution."

Independence Day dawned serenely beautiful. The rising sun was greeted with cannons and loud reports of giant firecrackers. A drum corps paraded the streets at an early hour, arousing the city for a day of patriotic enthusiasm.

It was still early in the morning when the streets began to fill up with the crowds. As morning advanced the number of the holiday-makers increased. Every incoming train brought its quota, and hundreds of automobiles and carriages conveyed the population of the rural districts to the scene of excitement and patriotism.

About ten o'clock came the great parade of floats, preceded by a long line of gaily decorated automobiles. The floats represented the various industries and business houses of Bronson and some of them had been

elaborately adorned and made a magnificent spectacle. At the head of the parade a traction engine, fitted up to represent a warship and carrying a band, moved slowly forward, with flying flags and gay music.

The United States is fortunate in its national holidays which are observed annually, and which tend to foster patriotism and national unity. Memorial Day, in the green springtime, recalls to the national mind the heroic struggles of former days, and reminds the citizens of our country that the price of liberty has always been self-sacrifice and suffering. In the fall of the year the annual Thanksgiving Day, which gathers together the citizenship in their homes and churches, gives emphasis to the bounty of God and His favors to this land of destiny. Midway between these two holidays comes the glorious Independence Day, celebrating the birth of the nation, and instilling into the minds of all the fundamental virtues of the fathers of our country and the principles which make democracy possible.

As the monster parade moved slowly through the streets of Bronson that morning Reginald Nelson mingled with the crowd of on-lookers, and felt his whole being thrilled with the patriotic emotions which were vibrant amongst the people. For the moment he forgot that he had staked his entire future on the issue of the *Courier* for that day. He forgot the rage and anger that unquestionably would be aroused against him by the men whose greed and falsity he had exposed.

"This is the true land of destiny," he said to him-

self, as he gazed on the passing pageant, and noticed the enthusiasm and spirit of the crowds which had massed themselves on either side of the line of march.

Just at that moment there were some of Bronson's citizens who were not at all interested in its celebration of Independence Day. In the office of Mr. Graham a little company composed of Roland Gregory, Ned Rowlands and Bud McCrea were sitting with blanched faces.

"Why didn't you report to us what he was going to do?" McCrea was saying angrily to Ned Rowlands.

"I knew nothing about it," the other replied, in a frightened tone of voice. "I did not know there was a detective working in the city or I should have advised you at once."

"What is to be done, Graham?" asked Bud McCrea, in a hopeless tone.

"The fellow has taken advantage of us," replied Mr. Graham, speaking with emphasis, "but he is in our power. Today we oust him from his place as editor. We will start the stories all over the city. I will begin action against him in the courts tomorrow for payment on his notes. You know they read "payable on demand." We will demand immediate payment, and I know he will not be able to meet it, and we will ruin his credit. Nelson will find out a thing or two before he is a week older."

The eyes of the lawyer flashed fire as he uttered these last words. On the table before him lay the special morning edition of the *Courier*. In heavy leaded type was the story of the insincerity of the city ad-

ministration in regard to reform of abuses and a complete list of all the gambling places and vicious resorts in Bronson, as well as the names of the owners of the property. It was a terrible exposure.

"But it's too late," said McCrea, with a groan. "The people will be roused to madness by this mass of stuff and they will make a clean-up themselves."

Mr. Graham was silent for a few moments and then said confidently, "The history of these spasmodic efforts at so-called reform shows that these ebullitions of popular outcry are short-lived. Let us be patient. With the *Courier* in the hands of a safe man we will have everything calmed down by election time."

"I hope so," responded McCrea, but he shook his head, dolefully.

"We must proceed to business," said Mr. Graham. "I want to go over to the park and hear Dr. Rutledge give his oration. Now we will depose Nelson right away, and you, Rowlands, are to take charge. The office is closed until five o'clock this evening. When Nelson returns you order him out and tell him that the officers of the *Courier Publishing Company* have discharged him, and have placed you in charge."

"Better send a couple of good trusty policemen up to the office at five o'clock," said Ned Rowlands. "That Englishman is a tough proposition when he gets excited."

"I am glad you suggested that," said Mr. Graham. "I will see that you are amply protected as the lawful editor."

After some further discussion the little company

separated, Mr. Graham walking to the large Bronson Park where the crowds had already assembled to hear the orator of the day.

A chorus was singing a patriotic melody as the lawyer approached the great mass of people who had surrounded the speaker's stand.

At the close of the music Edgar Prince stepped forward and introduced Allan Rutledge as the speaker for the occasion, making a short complimentary address. Mr. Graham started as he saw the minister stride to the front of the platform, for he noticed that he held in his hands a copy of the Independence Day edition of the Courier.

Allan Rutledge received an ovation from the immense throng, as he was now as well known and as popular in Bronson as he had formerly been in Wellington. After a few introductory remarks, he put the audience *en rapport* with himself by telling the story of a patriotic banquet which was held one Fourth of July in Chicago. "After the banquet," he said, "an American got up to propose a toast to his native land, and he called on them to honor the United States of America as the great country which was bounded on the north by Canada, on the south by the Carribean Sea, on the east by the Atlantic and on the west by the Pacific. Instantly," continued Allan Rutledge, "a German rose to his feet and in tones of indignation declared that he objected to the toast. 'It does not properly honor our great and glorious country,' he said. 'I want to propose a toast to America, bounded on the north by the North Pole and on the south by the

South Pole, on the east by Ireland and on the west by China.' Before he had taken his seat," continued the minister, "an Irishman was on his feet and getting on top of his chair, he cried, 'I object to this belittling of our glorious country. I want to make that toast as it ought to be, 'Here's to America, bounded on the north by the aurora borealis, on the south by the procession of the equinoxes, on the east by primeval chaos, and on the west by the Judgment Day!'" The great company of assembled patriots cheered and applauded as Allan Rutledge finished his story, and he proceeded in earnest tones: "This is indeed a glorious day. It is the birthday of our nation, this glorious nation which is God's last opportunity for the human race. The history of our country is the history of the rise, progress and victory of civil and religious liberty." The speaker then eloquently reviewed the leading events which led up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the principles for which the fathers fought and bled and died.

The audience was listening with the closest attention, when suddenly the speaker ceased. He stood silent for a full moment. Every eye rested upon him, wondering what he meant by his long pause.

"But Eronson is unworthy of a place in this land consecrated by the blood of our heroes," he exclaimed in thunder tones. "Why do we celebrate Independence Day? We have abandoned the principles of our fathers, and greed for gain and blasted honor have now the preëminence amongst us."

The crowd was thunder-struck. They stared at the

minister, unable to understand his meaning. He held out the copy of the *Courier* which had been in his hand during all his speech and shouted louder than ever, "Have you read today's *Courier*? It will tell you the black story of our infamy and shame."

In a few words the speaker then recounted the story of exposure which was told in the Independence Day issue of the paper, which was still unread by the vast majority of his listeners, and proceeded with increasing enthusiasm to stir up the people to end the rule of lawlessness and anarchy in their favored community.

"I well know these vile enemies of our country's good cannot stand the light of day, and your brave editor, Reginald Nelson, has turned on the light, and Bronson will yet be clean."

At the mention of the editor's name a mighty cheer went up from the crowd and one farmer was seen to throw his hat high in the air. It was Vivian Derwent's father, who was listening with intense eagerness to the oration of the speaker and who went wild with enthusiasm when Allan Rutledge referred in this way to the young Englishman.

"Mr. Nelson's all right!" he shouted.

The reception which was given to Reginald Nelson's name made Mr. Graham scowl darkly as he stood on the outskirts of the crowd, glaring at the speaker. He felt that he had overreached himself in giving, even for a brief space, the power of the press into the hands of the able Englishman. "This is serious," he said to himself.

In a little while the address was over and the people

thronged to the platform to congratulate the speaker and to assure him of their assent to his vigorous attacks on conditions in Bronson.

"We are going to change things and change them soon," said Edgar Prince, loudly, as he shook hands with Allan Rutledge. A friend of the manufacturer heard his words and shouted, "Edgar Prince for our next mayor!" There was instant applause by the company, and a mayoralty candidate was there and then nominated.

Amongst the others who made their way to the minister was Reginald Nelson himself. He had been lost in the crowd, and had listened with profound interest to the oration of his friend. At the mention of his newspaper and at the cheers which the crowd gave when Allan Rutledge spoke his name the Englishman was strangely moved. Tears came to his eyes and in his soul he said to himself, "It does pay a man to devote his time for the interest of his fellow men."

"Here is the real hero of the day," cried Allan Rutledge, as he espied Reginald. "Come up here, Mr. Nelson, and let the people see you."

Reginald was helped up on the platform, and the people shouted on every side, "Speech, speech!"

"Say something to them," urged Allan Rutledge, who was standing at his side.

"I want to thank you good people of Bronson," he began, simply, "for this reception which you have given me. I just wish to state in this public way that it grieved me to the heart to publish the real state of Bronson's misgovernment as I have done in today's

issue, but I did it in the interests of your homes and firesides. I believe you will not allow such conditions to exist when you know about them. My enemies will say that I have attacked Bronson, but I have only driven the knife of publicity into a cancerous ulcer which is poisoning the very life of our community. I thank you."

It was well for Reginald Nelson that he was given the opportunity of making this brief word of address on that occasion, as many thousands heard him, almost the entire crowd still lingering in the park. The cheers and applause which greeted him showed that, even if his Independence Day edition lost him the friendship of some of the people, the great mass of the populace were on his side. He felt assured that the *Courier* had been given a new lease of life.

After the speaking had finished the great company separated into family and neighborhood groups and hundreds of little picnic parties dotted Bronson Park. Mr. Derwent carried Reginald off with him to a secluded part of the grounds where his family were assembled with a few friends. As the editor left the stand in company with Mr. Derwent his eyes met the glance of Mr. Graham. The lawyer made no signs of recognition and the angry scowl on his face told Reginald that if he had gained some friends that day there was one powerful enemy whom he had aroused.

Vivian Derwent was the life of the little picnic party which Reginald had joined. She seated herself familiarly at his side and looked after his wants assidu-

ously. "You are not eating anything," she complained, as she passed him a big platter of tempting meats.

The editor tried to dismiss from his mind the unpleasant feelings which Mr. Graham's scowl had aroused and entered into the gaiety of the occasion.

"That's better," said the girl, seeing her companion enjoy his open-air banquet.

"It is hard for any one not to feel comfortable in your presence, Miss Vivian," said Reginald, gallantly. "I think I would soon get fat if I had you to wait on me every day."

"Vivian is at home now for the holidays," said Mr. Derwent, kindly. "You look thin and tired, Mr. Nelson. Come out and see us for a few days and we will put new life in you. There's no place like the farm, you know."

"Thank you," rejoined Reginald. "I have been feeling the need of a little vacation. I may take you at your word before long."

"That will be splendid," said Vivian, joyfully, while Mrs. Derwent nodded her assent also.

Reginald Nelson little knew how soon he would accept this invitation or under what circumstances he would seek the refuge of the Derwent home for recuperation.

CHAPTER XIX.

SWIFT PUNISHMENT.

It was after five o'clock before Reginald Nelson arrived at the Courier office on the evening of the eventful July Fourth. He was surprised to see his own private office open when he entered, and to hear some one manipulating his typewriter. He passed quickly inside and was amazed to see Ned Rowlands working diligently at the writing machine.

"What's the matter, Ned?" he exclaimed. "Is your own typewriter broken?"

"Have you not heard the news?" asked the other, in response.

"What news?"

"The directors had a meeting this morning and gave me the position of editor of the Courier. I am sorry for you, Nelson, but that edition of yours today was a bad break, and I am afraid it has ruined your life."

"Ruined my life?" said Reginald Nelson, in a dazed way. Then he aroused himself. "Get out of here, Rowlands," he ordered. "I am the editor of the Courier. The Englishman's eyes were shining as he spoke.

"Sorry, old man," said the other, familiarly, "but



"GET OUT OF HERE, ROWLANDS, I AM THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER."

you'll have to take your medicine. Here is my introductory editorial," and Ned Rowlands handed Reginald a sheet of typewriting. The Englishman glanced at the headline and saw that the article was entitled, "Greetings from the Courier's New Editor." He tore the sheet of paper into fragments and threw them on the floor.

"Get out of here," he thundered to his former city reporter.

Ned Rowlands laughed sarcastically in his face and sneered, "You forgot, Nelson, that you were not working for the public, but that you were working for the Courier Publishing Company. They have no more use for you."

"And I have no more use for you," exclaimed Reginald, seizing the other by the coat collar. "I have wanted to discharge you for a month and I do it now. Your place is vacant."

As he was speaking these words Reginald marched Ned Rowlands to the door of his private office, and pushed him into the outer room. The ousted city reporter made no resistance, being alarmed at the excitement of the other, and he was hastening away when he ran square into a gentleman who was approaching the editorial sanctum.

"Excuse me, sir," said Rowlands, glancing up and seeing the face of Mr. Graham, white with anger.

"Come back with me, you coward," said the lawyer, in a low tone. After the expulsion of his city reporter, Reginald had slammed the door and had just seated himself at his desk to collect his thoughts when he

heard the voice of Mr. Graham saying, "You are discharged as editor of the Courier, Mr. Nelson. We have no farther use for your services and you will oblige us by leaving the office at once. We have appointed Ned Rowlands in your place."

Reginald Nelson turned and glared at the intruders.

"Come, come," said the lawyer, sharply. "Get out of here."

"Who has discharged me?" asked Reginald, restraining himself with difficulty.

"The directors of the Courier Publishing Company."

"Who are these directors?" asked Reginald. "I am a part-owner of this paper and I claim to have some voice in the management." Reginald Nelson had paid no attention to the business management of the newspaper, leaving that entirely to Mr. Graham.

"I control a majority of the stock of this concern," said Mr. Graham, loftily, "and I have decided that such a person as you is not fit to be editor of the Courier. You will oblige me by leaving this office at once or I shall be forced to have you expelled by the officers of the law."

Reginald Nelson slowly began to see his hopeless position. He had looked on himself as part owner and manager of his paper. He believed that his course as an editor would be judged successful if he could keep his subscription lists growing, as a newspaper is saved or damned by this standard in the commercial world. Reginald felt that his declining number of readers was due to the incompetency of his city reporter, and the

consequent loss of confidence in the *Courier* by large numbers of the working people. He had been assured by the events of the day that his bold attack on the city administration, and his exposure of the evils which were tolerated by the Bronson officials, had re-established the credit of the paper as a genuine friend of reform. He had an extra large edition of that day's paper printed, but after Allan Rutledge's speech at Bronson Park the demand for the *Courier* was so great that the edition was soon exhausted and the young editor had been congratulated on every hand.

"I thought the *Courier* had deserted us," an enthusiastic advocate of reform had declared to him during the afternoon, "but your issue of today will make the *Courier* the most popular paper in all Michigan."

Encouraged by the marks of popular approval on every hand, and deeming that his position as editor had been assured by his Independence Day edition, Reginald Nelson had returned to the *Courier* office in high spirits. His interview with Ned Rowlands and the words of Mr. Graham had almost unmanned him. He could not as yet quite understand the situation.

"I will admit that the circulation of the paper dropped a thousand or so during the past few weeks," said Reginald, in a perplexed tone, "but that was the result of a lack of confidence in us as genuine friends of reform. The edition of today has convinced the most sceptical that the *Courier* will represent the people, and I look for an immediate rise in the number

of papers printed. I was going to order one thousand extra copies struck off for tomorrow."

Mr. Graham listened impatiently until Reginald had ceased and responded quickly, "We don't want you as our editor a day longer if the circulation increased at once ten thousand a day."

In a moment the whole situation became plain to Reginald. The *Courier* had been purchased by the enemies of reform. His position as editor had been given him in order to blind the people to the fact that henceforth the *Courier* was to be in the hands of these enemies. His bold, independent blow at protected vice had brought matters to an immediate crisis. He now saw why Mr. Graham had foisted on him such a fellow as New Rowlands, making him the city reporter. He now understood the bitter malignity of the scowl with which Mr. Graham had greeted him earlier in the day.

"You do not care to have an editor, then, whom the people trust?" said Reginald slowly. He turned and looked at Mr. Graham steadily.

"We will choose our own editor without asking the people's advice," snapped Mr. Graham.

"Let me tell you something, sir," replied the other, sitting up in his office chair and speaking with a loud voice. "This is the day of the people in Bronson, whether you like it or not. If you elect to put an editor in this chair in whom the people have no confidence the *Courier* is ruined and I will help to ruin it."

Reginald Nelson felt his strength returning. He met the look of the lawyer fearlessly.

"Let me show you something," responded Mr. Graham, sneeringly. He led the way out of the office into the printing room. Two or three men were already at work, and one of them was fixing one of the forms of the paper for the next day.

"Give Mr. Nelson a proof of that article which I wrote," ordered Mr. Graham.

The workman hastened to obey, the lawyer being recognized as the owner of the plant. In a few minutes a dampened "proof" was placed in Reginald's hands. "Read that," said the lawyer, snappingly.

In astonishment the editor began to read a bitter attack on the veracity of his Independence Day exposure.

"The owners of the Courier regret exceedingly," the article declared, "that Independence Day in Bronson was marred with the publication of some vile slanders against the honor of our fair city. The youthful editor to whom we entrusted the paper has betrayed his trust, but he has been summarily removed from his place as editor, and his past life is now being investigated as there are some rumors of former breaches of trust before he came to Bronson. He owes the Courier Publishing Company a large sum of money and action will be brought against him at once in our courts. The public is warned against him as a dangerous adventurer."

When Reginald Nelson had read these words he stopped and looked up at the lawyer with blazing eyes. "Are you going to publish these calumnies in the Courier?" he demanded, fiercely.

"Yes, and a good deal more, sir. We'll drive you out of Bronson in a week." Mr. Graham was grinding his teeth in a rage.

Reginald Nelson looked at him for a moment astounded and then his own anger overwhelmed him. He seized the "form" in which the offensive article against himself was, and swept it to the floor, scattering the type in every direction. "If you were a younger man," he shouted to Mr. Graham, "I would sweep this floor with you. Infamous rascal!"

Two burly policeman appeared at once on the scene, and the lawyer cried, "Take the madman out. Take him to jail for destruction of property. I will file a complaint."

The two policemen dashed at Reginald, one seizing each arm. The powerful Englishman struggled with his captors. With terrific force he threw one of them against the wall and turned to attack the other, but the officer drew his baton, and as Reginald reached for him he struck him a crashing blow on the head. The young man fell senseless on the floor.

"Take him to jail, take him to jail," shouted Mr. Graham. The two policemen stood silent, gazing at the prostrate form of their antagonist. "He has the strength of an ox," said the one whom Reginald had flung against the wall, rubbing his shoulder. "It is a good thing you hit him with the billy or he would have downed us both."

The policeman telephoned for the police ambulance and in a little while Reginald was lying on a cot in the Bronson jail.

It was an hour before the injured ex-editor revived. He opened his eyes and gazed around him.

"Where am I?" he asked in amazement.

"In jail," said an attendant, shortly, as he advanced to the cot. He was under the impression that Reginald was in a drunken stupor as he did not know who the prisoner was nor why he was brought to the city bastille.

"Jail," exclaimed Reginald. His memory began to return. He remembered his fight with the policemen in the printing room of the *Courier*.

"Telephone to the Rev. Allan Rutledge to come to me at once," he requested.

In less than fifteen minutes Allan Rutledge was sitting on the edge of the cot, speaking soothingly to the injured man.

"My God, what an outrage! And to think that this has been done in Bronson on Independence Day," exclaimed Allan Rutledge when Reginald had told him his story.

Allan Rutledge at once went to the office of the jail and arranged that Reginald should be immediately removed to the Cameron home. "I will be responsible," said the minister.

When Reginald Nelson staggered into the Cameron home, assisted by Allan Rutledge, the good Scotchman and his wife were greatly frightened.

"What's wrong with our boy?" asked Mr. Cameron, anxiously.

"Not very much," replied Allan. "He will soon be all right. Let us take him upstairs to bed at once."

All that night the minister remained by the bedside of the ex-editor.

A doctor was called and he examined the wound on his head and shook his head gravely. Reginald Nelson gradually sunk into a stupor and in the morning his condition was serious.

The next day the issue of the *Courier* astounded the people of Bronson.

Mr. Graham had a signed article in the paper denouncing Reginald Nelson and giving his version of the fight in the printing room. He characterized the Independence Day edition as a mass of libel, and promised the people that the owners of the paper would be more careful in their supervision of the newspaper. "The *Courier* has always borne the reputation of being a conservative and safe paper, and we regret very much that this adventurer, who wormed himself into the confidence of so many of our citizens, has brought such a disgrace upon us." These were the closing words of Mr. Graham's statement. The citizens were at once divided into two camps, some asserting that they always knew that Reginald Nelson was an impostor, and the others, at first greatly in the majority, protested that the ex-editor had been misjudged.

In the issue of the day following notice was given of the suit against Reginald by the *Courier* Publishing Company, and dark hints were made here and there in the paper in regard to stories which had become current regarding the immigrant's career in England. It was reported that he had deserted a wife in the old

country, that he was a fugitive from justice, and that he was an ex-criminal.

These stories were also circulated on the streets of Bronson, and the popular sentiment began to turn against the unfortunate Reginald.

After a week a good deal of the excitement had calmed down, and Ned Rowlands was in charge as editor, although he was assisted daily by Mr. Graham, who spent a large part of his time in the newspaper office.

The city administration made another apparently successful effort to banish open gambling and vice, but this second display of reforming zeal was much less convincing than the first, and the reformers began to organize for a new city ticket at the fall election.

During these days Reginald Nelson lay helpless in his room at the Cameron home. The blow on his head, combined with the mental shock which he had received on the evening of the fatal July Fourth, produced an attack of brain fever which wasted the young man day by day. The charges against him at police headquarters had been dismissed, but his condition was pitiable. He was altogether without money, having failed to draw his salary from the Courier treasury during his term as editor, and a judgment for the amount of his note to the newspaper company having been found against him. His reputation seemed lost as every day his enemies gained ground, and the stories which had been scattered broadcast were now commonly believed. Worst of all, his health seemed permanently injured.

"I fear that was a fatal blow," said the doctor, about two weeks after the encounter in which the policeman's baton had crashed against Reginald's head.

Dr. Gracely and Allan Rutledge were discussing the case in the front room of the Cameron home.

"What does he need to help him?" asked the minister, with moist eyes.

"He is discouraged in body, soul and spirit," replied the doctor. "If he could be moved out of Bronson to some quiet country place for a month or two there is a chance that he might begin to regain his faculties."

"I know what we will do," responded Allan Rutledge. "Mr. Derwent was here yesterday enquiring for him. I was afraid to allow him to see Reginald, but he seemed greatly interested in the young man. I happened to be here when he called. He mentioned that he wished he was well enough to go home with him to the farm."

"I know Derwent's place well. That would be just the place for him," said the doctor, quickly.

For several days previous to this no one had been allowed to see Reginald except Allan Rutledge and the doctor, but that morning Joy Graham appeared at the Cameron home. Mrs. Cameron greeted her sadly, telling how poorly the young man was. "They have just murdered the bairn," said the Scotchwoman, beginning to cry, "and those awful lies they are telling about him. People are beginning to believe them." Mrs. Cameron covered her face and wept silently.

"Let me see him," Joy pleaded.

"I will ask the nurse," said the woman, going up to the sick man's room.

In a few moments she returned and led Joy upstairs. When the girl saw the wan face of the invalid she was startled at the awful change which two weeks had wrought. Reginald's face was the picture of despair. It was this gloom which had so puzzled and discouraged the physician.

As Joy Graham approached the bedside of the sufferer he opened his eyes and a gleam of light shone in them as he recognized her. He put out his hand feebly.

"This is kind," he murmured.

"You will get well, Mr. Nelson, and you will finish your work in Bronson yet. It is only begun."

The light in the sick man's eyes grew brighter as she spoke.

"I believe in you," she whispered, "with all my heart and soul."

That was all she said, but from that day hope began to spring up in the heart of the stricken man. A few days later Allan Rutledge spoke to Reginald about his removal to the Derwent farm.

"Take me out there," he said, feebly. "I want to get well. I will fight my battle in Bronson to a finish yet."

The minister was pleased to see the rising spirits of his friend. The day before he was removed to the country Mr. Townley called to see him.

"I hope you don't think I made a mistake in invit-

ing you to Bronson," said Mr. Townley, as they talked together.

"No, no," Reginald replied. "I have been wounded in the battle, but not killed. I shall arise and finish my work."

"We had a great meeting at the Y. M. C. A. last Sunday afternoon, said Mr. Townley, "and we vindicated you. The Courier has dug its own grave."

"The right is bound to win," said Reginald, with a little smile.

Not only was the cause of Reginald advocated at the Y. M. C. A. meeting to which Mr. Townley referred, but Allan Rutledge gave a whole sermon to the case, and denounced the ex-editor's enemies as "sand-baggers and holdup-men." When it was learned at the Derwent home that Reginald Nelson was to be removed there the whole household rejoiced, but Vivian Derwent was especially pleased.

"We will soon nurse him back to health," said the girl, cheerfully, "and he will teach that band of thugs in Bronson to behave themselves. I am mad enough at Joy's father to shoot him."

Mr. Derwent drove in with his carriage to bring the young man out to his home, and Vivian accompanied him. The girl sat in the back seat with the young ex-editor, and she was delighted to see his growing cheerfulness as he left Bronson behind.

"I am glad to get away from Bronson," he admitted to her. "I am going back, but a sick soldier longs for his home and not for the battle front."

"That's very nice of you to call our place 'home,' "

said Vivian, roguishly. "We want you to make it your home just as long as you want to."

When they arrived at the farm Reginald was given a cool, cheerful room on the ground floor, and he began to recuperate rapidly. In a week's time he was able to walk out into the yard, and before two weeks were over his completed recovery was assured.

"You are positive that there has been no permanent injury," Allan Rutledge had asked Dr. Gracely.

"None whatever," replied the physician, promptly. "The young man will be ready for his next round with the Bronson 'gang' in another week."

CHAPTER XX.

JOY GRAHAM'S VISIT.

One August day, early in the month, George Caldwell was busy with his ledger in the bank when he heard a pleasant "good-morning" from some one outside the railing. He glanced up and responded, "Glad to see you, Miss Joy. When did you get back?"

"Just this morning," answered Joy Graham. "I came over on the interurban to look after a few matters of business. We are having a very pleasant outing at the lake." It was the custom for many of the residents of Bronson to spend the heated months in cottages at some of the beautiful little lakes which dot that part of southern Michigan. The Grahams had a cottage which was built by the side of a lake connected with Bronson by an interurban electric railroad so that Mr. Graham came back and forth to his office and it was a short trip for the family to return if necessary.

"I suppose your father and mother came with you?" interrogated George Caldwell.

"No, I came alone. Papa is in the East with Roland, trying to find a new editor for the paper. Ned Rowlands has proved a failure as you know."

"It was too bad your father had a quarrel with Mr. Nelson. He was making the Courier boom."

"How is Mr. Nelson getting along?" asked the girl, quickly.

"He is almost well again," responded the other, heartily. "The fresh air of the country and the hospitality of the Derwent home have worked wonders with him."

"And the cheerful companionship of such a girl as Vivian," laughed Joy Graham.

"Vivian has been very attentive to him," answered George Caldwell, with an air of resignation.

"She doesn't seem to pay much attention to these stories that have been going the rounds all over town," continued Joy. "They are discussing Mr. Nelson out at the lake. Some seem to think that where there is so much smoke there must be some fire."

"Those foolish stories are made up of whole cloth," responded the young banker, angrily.

"But some people believe them," said the girl, shaking her head. "Even at the lake a number think that Mr. Nelson is an adventurer, and I understand there is quite a sentiment against him in Bronson."

"I am getting real angry about the treatment Mr. Nelson has received," said George Caldwell. "I didn't like the way he was able to catch Vivian's attention, but I believe in fair play and honest dealing. His enemies have thrown so much mud that some of it has stuck."

"I am glad to know that you have confidence in him," said Joy Graham, earnestly.

"Of course we have confidence in him," exclaimed the young man, earnestly. "Just last night a number of us had a conference in regard to his future and we are going to see that he gets a fair start in some other place. It would seem to be unwise for him to try to establish himself again in Bronson."

"Do all his friends think he ought to leave Bronson?" asked Joy Graham, in a disappointed tone.

"No, no. Both Dr. Rutledge and Mr. Townley think he ought to remain here and fight his battle out to a finish."

"Do you know what plans Mr. Nelson has been making for himself?" asked the girl.

"No," responded the other. "I saw him the other day and his only anxiety was for the full recovery of his health. That blow on his head which the policeman dealt him might have been disastrous, but we are now assured there will be no permanent ill results."

"I want you to take me out to Derwent's this evening, George," said the girl, a little later, as the two friends parted.

"I shall be glad to do so," answered the other, "and I know Mr. Nelson will be delighted to see you."

"Don't say anything to anyone about it," cautioned the girl. "Drive up for me at the house about seven o'clock."

At the appointed hour that evening a handsome, single-seated Cadillac motor car stopped before the Graham home, and in a few moments George Caldwell and Joy Graham were speeding out of Bronson into the country. It was a delightful August evening and for

a good part of the way they passed through the lovely wooded drive by the side of the Bronson river. It was not the nearest way to the Derwent farm, but with his high-powered motor car George Caldwell decided that the "longest way around was the pleasantest way there."

As the two friends whirled along they conversed on topics of interest to them both; the prosperity of the Central Church under the administration of Dr. Rutledge, the progress of reform in Bronson, and the future fortunes of Reginald Nelson.

It was the latter topic that evidently was nearest the heart of Joy Graham that evening.

"What are some of these stories they are still telling around about Mr. Nelson?" asked Joy.

"They say that he abandoned a wife in England; that he is a fugitive from justice, and that his record is bad."

"I heard that story about a wife in England long ago," responded the girl, with disgust. "Roland told it to me at first and I thought there might be something to it as Mr. Nelson has been so silent about his life in England, but I persuaded Mrs. Rutledge to ask him, and she says his look of amazement at such a charge convinced her of the absolute falsity of the slander."

"The only excuse there is for these stories is the fact that Mr. Nelson has been so quiet about his English life, as you just said," interposed George Caldwell, thoughtfully. "He will have to prove the falsity of the idle tales by a full statement of his past life if he expects to continue as a factor in Bronson's life."

"That he will be able to do at the right time," replied Joy Graham, with confidence. "There is one thing sure, he is going to remain in Bronson, and he will be our leading editor."

"Bravo," exclaimed her companion. "I see one thing that Mr. Nelson is a master at achieving. He certainly knows how to win the devotion of the fair sex better than we natives. Both you and Vivian are so enthusiastic in his support that with such backing he cannot fail."

The motor car was rapidly approaching the Derwent home. "I have not been out here since the night of our sleigh-ride party," said the girl. "What a lovely time we had that evening. Ah, there's the home," she exclaimed, as the car shot round a bend in the road.

On every side the well-tilled fields gave evidence of the prosperity of the farmers, and an air of peace and contentment brooded over the countryside. "This was an ideal place for Mr. Nelson to come," said Joy Graham, with enthusiasm, as the motor car climbed the little hill that led into the yard of the Derwent farm.

It was still early in the evening, and Mr. Derwent was attending to the usual evening chores, while Mrs. Derwent and Vivian were busy in the house. Reginald Nelson was sitting alone on the ample porch which extended across the entire front side of the home. He had been thinking to himself about his future plans.

"I am almost well again," he thought. "I must plan for my next move." His first idea was that he should seek employment again at the railroad office,

but he felt that it would be too humiliating for him to start over again as he had once done.

"If only I were able I would like to start a real newspaper of my own in Bronson. I believe I could win in spite of McCrea, Graham, Gregory, the Courier, and the very devil himself," he said to himself, confidently.

At the supper that evening Mr. Derwent had commented on the loss of patronage which the Courier was sustaining. "I came to Bronson at the psychological moment," he meditated, "but I seem to have been outwitted in the first skirmish, but I will win in the end, so help me God."

There was a look of intenseness and determination on his face as he gave himself to these reflections. He was still pale, but the light had come back to his eyes, and he was regaining his strength in a remarkable way. He noticed the automobile speeding along the road, and soon recognized it as George Caldwell's. A moment more and the car stopped in the yard a few feet from where he sat, and Joy Graham was shouting to him:

"Splendid, Mr. Nelson, splendid. You are a well man again."

Vivian Derwent, from the window, noticed the greeting between the two friends and said to herself, "I don't think Roland Gregory would like to see Joy's smile as she shook his hand."

There was indeed a deep sympathy between them. Joy Graham had found out a good deal in regard to the scheme of the conspirators who were determined

to ruin Reginald, and her woman's heart was naturally also aroused by the recent sufferings of the innocent ex-editor. On the other hand, Reginald Nelson could remember the moment that Joy Graham had whispered to him as he lay in his wretchedness in the Cameron home, "I believe in you." He traced the beginning of his swift recovery to these magic words.

In a few moments Vivian came out and George Caldwell also joined the company on the porch. After a little while, Joy Graham turned to George and Vivian, who were sitting together on a settee, and said, "Won't you two please excuse Mr. Nelson and myself. I want to talk a little business to him privately."

Leaving them on the porch, Reginald and Joy Graham sauntered out into a pasture field, and the girl turned eagerly to her companion, "I want you to forgive papa," she said, "for the shameful part he has had in bringing all this trouble and sickness upon you. He is not himself some way. I cannot understand it and mama is puzzled. Ever since the tabernacle meetings he seems like a different man."

"I bear him no malice," said Reginald, kindly.

"I have come to see you this evening about your future plans," continued the girl. "It may seem improper for a young woman in my place to do this, but I am not doing it for your sake, remember. I am thinking of the honor of our family, and also of the good of Bronson. We need just such a paper in Bronson as you had made the Courier, a newspaper that has principle and which stands for the welfare of the community at all times."

Reginald Nelson listened with pleasure. His own ideal of what a newspaper should be was exactly as the girl had expressed it.

"I thank you, Miss Graham," he interposed, earnestly.

"I want you to originate and control just such a newspaper in Bronson," said the girl. "I have even named this new paper. It will be called the Bronson Tribune, and the editor of it will be Reginald Nelson."

The ex-editor looked in astonishment at the girl by his side. As he gazed at her he felt a strange pain come to his soul. He was making a contrast between Joy Graham as she appeared that evening and Joy Graham as he had first seen her on board the Neptune just a year before. The year had certainly changed her. Then her cheeks were rosy, her black eyes sparkled with care-free merriment, her whole figure was that of a happy, joyous maiden in the first flush of her captivating young womanhood. Now she appeared care-worn and anxious; her face was pale; the dark eyes were encircled by dark rings which looked ominous; her whole figure was that of a young girl who had been given too heavy a load to carry and who was already showing signs of weariness.

"Tell me what you mean," Reginald responded, after a brief pause.

"I have a little fortune which was left to me by my mother's family," Joy Graham continued. "This came into my entire control when I was eighteen and I want to use a part of it in this enterprise for the good of

Bronson. I said I believed in you. Now I will prove it."

The girl stopped and opened a handbag which she carried on her left arm. She took out a small package and handed it to Reginald. "You will find five thousand dollars in that package," she said. "At the end of a month Mr. Davis Parker, the lawyer, will give you another package of bills of equal amount, and in still another month you will get five thousand more. I want to entrust this to you that you may establish with it a real newspaper which will make effective in our social life the teachings of Mr. Sunday and Dr. Rutledge."

Reginald Nelson was too amazed to speak for a moment and he stood holding the package which the girl had given him, looking alternately from it to his companion.

"Don't you understand?" asked Joy.

"I understand," he answered, slowly, "but I cannot accept your kindness and confidence, Miss Graham. I could not think of thus risking your inheritance."

"It is a matter of business, remember," said the girl, with determination. "I have decided to second the attempts which are being made to work lasting reforms in our Bronson life. If you will not carry out my plans I must look further."

"The newspaper is to belong to you, then." After a silence Reginald spoke thus to the girl.

"Yes," she answered, "but my part in the enterprise is, of course, to remain a secret for the present. Mr. Davis Parker will act as my trustee, and you will never

need to consult with me directly in regard to anything connected with the Bronson Tribune as he will be my agent."

Reginald Nelson knew Mr. Davis Parker well. He was one of the rising young lawyers in Bronson, and in company with several other members of the Bronson bar he had "hit the sawdust trail" during the tabernacle meetings. He was an enthusiastic advocate of reform, and on the fatal fourth of July, which had brought disaster to Reginald, he well remembered the cordial greetings given to him in Bronson Park by the young attorney.

"Give me time to think a moment," he said, in a perplexed way. They walked on in silence, the darkness beginning to come down upon them.

"I think I understand your proposition, Miss Graham, and I accept it, assuring you that I will guarantee you against any financial loss. I am glad to say that I can make good this guarantee some time."

"No guarantee is necessary," replied the girl, stoutly. "I am making a business investment, and I will take the risk that every investment of the kind involves."

"The enterprise will succeed," said Reginald, his enthusiasm beginning to awaken as he saw his life-plans open before him.

On their way back to the house Joy Graham suggested to Reginald some things which he should do at once.

"You must, first of all, pay off the judgment against you which the Courier holds, and about which the

paper has been complaining so much. Then you must stop absolutely the printing of any personalities reflecting on your character by the Courier. I talked about this with Mr. Parker to-day and if you will see him he will give you some legal advice in the matter."

"I shall do as you say," responded Reginald, finally, although at first he refused to use any of the money to pay for his interest in the Courier. Joy Graham soon convinced him of the wisdom of her suggestion.

"When do you think you can bring out the first edition of the Tribune?" asked Joy, as they neared the Derwent home.

"I will return to Bronson to-morrow," rejoined Reginald, "and I think I can rent a building, get machinery and workmen together so that I can begin publication within a month or six weeks."

"It will be a great joy to Dr. Rutledge. He has been much discouraged by the seeming triumph of your enemies, but he has been defending you and your policies in season and out of season."

"I would like to have just one person in addition to Mr. Parker who should know the real owner of the Tribune," said Reginald. "Will you allow me to speak of it to Dr. Rutledge?"

"He knows all about it already," said Joy. "I felt that I needed some friendly counsel, so I took both Dr. Rutledge and his wife into my confidence. You will find them your constant friends."

"I owe much to them already," he responded.

They had now reached the gate leading into the yard, and Vivian Derwent cried out, "Hurry up, folks.

It is getting late, and we want you to have some refreshments before going home."

"Where have you two been?" asked the farmer's daughter when they had reached the porch. "If I see any more of this, Joy, I shall be compelled to speak to Roland."

"Don't worry," replied Joy, with a wan little smile. "Mr. Nelson and I have finished all the business discussion we will ever need to have together. I came to announce to him that he is to be the editor of a new paper which will soon be published in Bronson."

"How fine!" exclaimed Vivian. "I am so glad Mr. Nelson will remain in Bronson. He has been threatening sometimes to shake the dust off his feet and leave Bronson for good."

"I think I am in Bronson to remain," replied Reginald. "I have more attention and better care here than I could possibly expect anywhere else. Don't you think so, George?" he asked, familiarly of the young man. George Caldwell agreed heartily, and the conversation drifted to other subjects. The four young people entered the house, and Mrs. Derwent served ice cream and cake. Vivian sat down at the piano and in a little while the gay young people were singing popular songs together.

"I have had a good time to-night," said Joy Graham, as she and George Caldwell were driving back to Bronson. "What a dear girl Vivian is! You will be happy with Vivian, George."

"I used to think so," responded the other, dolefully,

"but since Mr. Nelson has appeared Vivian seems to think that I am one too many."

"Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, remember," answered Joy, cheerfully. "I rather think that her interest in Mr. Nelson is a passing fancy. Don't get discouraged."

"I had hoped that Vivian and I would get married about the same time that you and Roland were," said the other, hopelessly, "but I think I am not going to have Roland's luck."

The mention of her own coming marriage depressed the spirits of Joy Graham, and George Caldwell wondered at her sudden quietness.

On the following day, to the surprise of friends and enemies alike, Reginald Nelson appeared in Bronson, and commenced at once his plans for the publication of the Bronson Tribune.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BRONSON TRIBUNE.

When Mr. Graham and Roland Gregory returned from their trip to the East, where they had engaged a new editor at a high salary, they were astounded to hear of Reginald Nelson's sudden reappearance in Bronson and of his contemplated plans for a rival newspaper. Ned Rowlands had proved entirely incompetent, and the *Courier* had already lost much prestige. Its backers were assured that a new editor would soon restore it to popular favor, but the information as to the establishment of the rival paper was very disquieting.

"It is a bluff," said Mr. Graham, in astonishment, when he first heard the news. "The fellow will not dare to do that since we have found him out."

Mr. Graham had written some months before to the law firm which had sent a letter of introduction on behalf of the Englishman. The law firm was one of the most prominent in London and Mr. Graham asked them in regard to Reginald's antecedents in England. The response was very curt, merely stating that the firm was not at liberty to disclose the information requested and adding, "We trust the young man is doing all right."

This letter confirmed Mr. Graham in his prejudices against Reginald and convinced him that his past record was such as would not bear the light. Ever since the fateful Fourth of July the *Courier* had at intervals made slighting remarks in regard to its editor and kept assuring the public that the whole truth would soon be known. The exposure of the resorts and the owners of the illegally-used property was denounced as a slander on Bronson's fair name, and altogether the public mind was in a haze.

Meanwhile, during the hot term in summer, when everything moves sleepily along, the city administration made no effort to redeem in any effective way their pledges for reform.

If Mr. Graham was astonished when he first heard of Reginald Nelson's purpose to start a rival newspaper, he was dumfounded the next day at something still more amazing to him. Davis Parker, the young lawyer who was the legal adviser of the reform element, called on him and paid in full the amount of the judgment against Reginald for his shares of stock in the *Courier Publishing Company*.

"Do you want to purchase these shares which Mr. Nelson owns?" asked the young lawyer after he had settled the judgment by depositing with Mr. Graham the cash for the full amount.

"At what price will he sell them?" asked Mr. Graham, in response.

"He has authorized me to sell them to you at the same price he paid for them. If you do not buy them

he will advertise them for sale in his own paper which will be issued in a few weeks."

"The shares are not worth what he paid for them now," responded the lawyer, somewhat off his guard.

"All right," answered Davis Parker; "he will advertise them and get what he can out of them. He does not wish to have any connection henceforth with the Courier."

Before leaving Mr. Graham's office Davis Parker gave the older lawyer a still more severe shock by remarking, "You have been publishing a number of defamatory articles for over a month in regard to Mr. Nelson. I am sure you know you have already laid yourself liable to a suit for slander. However, Mr. Nelson will pay no attention to what has already been printed in your newspaper, but if you mention him again in any such way he has ordered me to begin a suit for damages immediately. I would advise the Courier to omit all personalities hereafter reflecting on the name or reputation of Mr. Nelson."

"We will see about that," answered Mr. Graham, huffily.

At a conference of Bud McCrea's friends, which was held that evening in the Courier office, the sudden turn of affairs was discussed by the discouraged conspirators.

"I thought we had that —— fellow, Nelson, fixed," exclaimed McCrea, with an oath.

"Those preachers, Rutledge and Townley, are to blame for this unsettled state of affairs," asserted Roland Gregory.

One of the councilmen of the city was present, and he informed them that a reform ticket had already been agreed on by the "Rutledge crowd," as he called the reformers.

"I heard about that," said Roland Gregory. "I understand they have put up Edgar Prince's name for mayor, and George Caldwell, Dr. Gracely and Mr. Cameron have been picked out for councilmen. Think of it?"

Bud McCrea frowned darkly as he heard these names spoken which he well knew boded no good to his empire in Bronson.

"That fellow, Nelson, —— him, is at the bottom of it all. He is worse than the preachers. Can't we make away with him?"

There was a fiendish scowl on the boss's face as he spoke. It is no child's play to interfere in "practical politics" in some American cities, as other reformers besides Reginald Nelson have discovered.

"You are right, McCrea," chimed in Roland Gregory. "If I got a good chance I would like to rid our community of that fellow myself."

"No, no," said Mr. Graham, frowning. "We do not want to use any illegal way in which to defeat these upstart disturbers in Bronson's politics."

"Who is this fellow, Nelson?" asked McCrea.

Mr. Graham told the history of Reginald as far as he knew it, speaking of the letter which he had received from London a short time before.

"I am convinced there is something in his record in England, if we can get hold of it, which will enable us

to hurl him out of our community," said Mr. Graham, earnestly. "Let us keep quiet for a few weeks and I will investigate."

Beginning to feel the helplessness of a "boss" when the people are once aroused, and seeing his political "machine" losing its effectiveness in every way, McCrea was compelled to acquiesce, although he was eager for immediate action of some kind, even of the black-hand variety at which he had more than hinted.

Altogether innocent of the further efforts which were being made to discredit and ruin him, Reginald Nelson was working like a Trojan getting his new publishing plant in order. Fortunately, a few days before the visit of Joy Graham to the Derwent farm the foreman of the Courier had resigned, being unable to endure the insolence of Ned Rowlands. Reginald Nelson found him packing his household goods and getting ready to leave Bronson for Grand Rapids, where he had been offered a minor position in one of the printing offices. It did not take much persuasion on Reginald's part to convince the ex-foreman of the Courier that it was to his interest to remain in Bronson, and with the competent assistance of this lieutenant Reginald was soon able to gather together a force of employees and to rush to completion all the preparations necessary for the publication of the Bronson Tribune. Machinery was shipped from Chicago, supplies were ordered and workmen were busy day by day in fitting up the plant.

"Where did the fellow get his money?" asked Ro-

land Gregory of his prospective father-in-law one day as the two men were talking in the Graham home.

Joy Graham was sitting in the room at the time, and she listened attentively to the conversation of her future husband and her father.

"I am unable to find out who is backing him financially, but I expect it is Edgar Prince. Prince will be supported for mayor by this new sheet and he well knows that the Courier will most bitterly oppose his election."

"It is strange to me," responded Gregory, moodily, "how that fellow has worked his way into the confidence of the Bronson people, or at least some of them."

As he spoke these words Roland Gregory turned to Joy Graham and noticed a flush mantle to the cheek of the girl.

"Even Joy," he continued, in an irritated tone, "thinks him worthy of notice, and she persisted in speaking to him on the street today although I asked her to ignore him."

"Mr. Nelson is one of the members of our church," responded Joy Graham, in a low tone, "and it would not look well for members of the same church to slight and ignore each other."

"Bosh!" exclaimed her father, with indignation. "This whole church business is a fraud. I am altogether disgusted with this man Rutledge. I consider that he has helped to mix everything up in a hopeless

mess since he came, especially since those Sunday tabernacle meetings.

"I think Bronson is arousing itself to be worthy of its high place in Southern Michigan," answered the girl, bravely. "The reforms which Edgar Prince and his friends are fighting for mean the redemption of our city from social paganism."

"Hush, daughter," responded Mr. Graham, impatiently, while Roland Gregory gazed at her in a surprised manner.

"I hope you do not think of becoming a suffragette," exclaimed Roland Gregory, somewhat nettled.

Joy Graham smiled and answered, "Worse things than woman suffrage might happen to Michigan."

"If you want to enter politics, Joy," said Roland, laughingly, "you will have an opportunity this fall. Your father is to run for mayor against Edgar Prince."

"Is that so, father?" asked Joy Graham, with a pained look.

"The honor has been offered me by some of our leading citizens of heading the fight for a sane administration in Bronson," answered Mr. Graham, "and I feel it is my duty as a good citizen to accept the honor."

Joy Graham was silent as she knew further talk was useless, but she was greatly distressed to know that the lawless and "wide-open" element in Bronson had prevailed on her father to accept their nomination for the office of mayor. She knew that it meant a bitter fight against him by the Bronson Tribune, and she began to

feel somewhat uncomfortable over her secret connection with that paper. She felt that her life had suddenly grown difficult, almost impossible.

The news that Mr. Graham, of the law firm of Millman and Graham, had accepted the nomination for mayor from the hands of McCrea and his friends brought much joy to Bronson's underworld as well as to many others in Bronson who looked askance at the efforts of Edgar Prince to reform the social life of the community.

The two sides who were seeking the control of Bronson were now lined up.

The Edgar Prince faction suffered the disadvantage of being without a newspaper, while the Courier in every possible way hurled abuse and scorn at the "visionaries" who had forgotten that Bronson was a "metropolitan city" and who wished to ruin it commercially by unwise limitation of individual liberty.

"When can you issue the first number of the Tribune" asked Edgar Prince, anxiously, one day as he stopped at the Tribune plant where Reginald was hurrying things along as fast as he could. It was about the middle of September, and the political campaign was getting into full swing.

"I am planning to bring out the first number on October first," answered Reginald, promptly. "That will give us over a month in which to enlighten the people of Bronson in regard to some things which ought to be known, and I have no fears about the result."

"The new editor of the Courier is an able fellow," responded Mr. Prince, "and I can see that he is influencing some of our business men to favor the wide-open policy. I am anxious to have your assistance as soon as possible."

"Come into our press room, and see the new machinery which we are installing," said Reginald, and he ushered Edgar Prince into his plant. Edgar Prince was greatly pleased with the completeness with which the young editor was fitting up his plant, and asked him if he needed any money.

"I have been thinking," said Reginald slowly, "that it would be an advantage if we could erect our own building for the Tribune and plan to enter it next spring. If we could begin the erection at once it would give the paper a better standing in the community from the beginning and would materially help us." Edgar Prince looked closely at the other.

"I mean," continued Reginald, "that if I could get some of the business men in Bronson, who are interested in our reforms, to take stock in the Tribune I believe I could make the newspaper a power not only in Bronson, but all over southern Michigan."

After a further conference, Edgar Prince promised to talk the matter over with some of his friends, and the result was that a large Tribune Publishing Company was organized, and preparations were made to erect a commodious brick building which would be the permanent home of the newspaper.

A week before the publication of the much expected first issue of the Tribune Reginald Nelson distributed

circulars over Bronson announcing the advent of the new organ of reform. The circulars were headed, in leaded type, "The Bronson Tribune, The People's Paper."

This circular described briefly the policies which would be advocated by the Tribune, and promised some interesting details in regard to the exposure made in the Independence Day edition of the Courier. "The Tribune will be a newspaper without a muzzle," said the circular in conclusion. "It will fight any and every proposition which it believes to be to the detriment of the people of Bronson, regardless of consequences. The editor is not seeking a political office as his reward, but seeks first the approval of his own conscience and the approbation of our best citizens."

The city of Bronson was seething with excitement on the eventful first of October. The Tribune came out in the morning and by nine o'clock every copy of the large edition had been sold. Neighboring towns, such as Augsley, which took an interest in the battle which was being waged in Bronson, ordered the papers by the score.

That morning Allan Rutledge and his wife sat in the study reading the first issue of the paper with absorbing interest.

"He is a born editor," said Allan Rutledge to his wife, after he had glanced over the make-up of the new paper. "See how complete these Associated Press dispatches are," he said, holding up the first page. "Just as a newspaper, independent of its principle, the Tribune has outclassed the Courier already."

Turning to the editorial columns, the minister noted with pleasure that a text from the Bible headed this part of the paper. It was a quotation from Genesis, the first chapter: "Let there be light." The leading editorial was in harmony with this ancient declaration of Holy Writ, and declared the editor's purpose to turn the light on the life of Bronson. "This paper will reflect the life of this community," said the editorial. "If there are things being done in Bronson which are commendable the Tribune will print them with pleasure. If dark deeds are being committed in our city, either in our factories or in our city hall, they shall be mercilessly exposed, for this paper will be as cruel as the truth."

"There is some force to that editorial," remarked Allan Rutledge, "after he had finished reading it aloud.

"It sounds like Reginald, doesn't it?" said Mrs. Rutledge. "I think he is a remarkable young man."

"Ah, here is an announcement in the "Society Column" of the wedding of Roland Gregory and Joy Graham. It is to be on October twentieth."

Allan Rutledge said these words in an anxious tone.

"Poor Joy," said Mrs. Rutledge, sadly. "I was talking with her yesterday and she looked so wan and sad. I believe this coming wedding is breaking her heart. She thinks she is pledged to Mr. Gregory and she believes she can reform him if she marries him."

"I wish you would see her," said the minister, "and find out what her feelings really are. If she does not love Roland Gregory her marriage will be a mockery

and I would rather officiate at her funeral than at her wedding in such a case."

"I will see her," said the other, promptly, "but I fear it is too late to prevail on her to change her mind."

Allan Rutledge turned his attention again to the newspaper. "Here are some of the indictments of our present administration," he said, excitedly. "Let me read you this paragraph."

Amongst the things for which the Tribune indicted the administration of Bronson was indifference to the Mae Mobray tragedy. "The affair was hushed up as soon as possible," said the Tribune, "instead of the full investigation of every circumstance connected with the tragedy which ought to have followed such a crime."

"That makes me think," said Mrs. Rutledge. "I saw Mrs. Mobray yesterday morning, and she asked me about that ring which she gave me a long time ago."

"What ring?" said Allan Rutledge, laying aside the newspaper.

"The ring which Mrs. Mobray found on the finger of Mae after her death. You remember I gave it to you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the minister. "I remember. I had forgotten in some way altogether about it. I put it in my desk in this little drawer which I hardly ever open. So much has happened in Bronson lately that the matter slipped my mind entirely."

He opened the drawer and took out the gold band which he had laid there the evening previous to the midnight tour of Bronson.

"I shall attend to this at once," he said, taking the ring and laying it on his desk.

That morning he sent a letter to a jewelry firm in Chicago, enclosing the ring and asking them to trace, if possible, the buyer.

In two weeks he received a letter, returning the ring, and giving as the name of the buyer a prominent citizen in Bronson.

Allan Rutledge read the name and gasped, "Can it be possible?"

CHAPTER XXII.

ALLAN RUTLEDGE'S SECRET.

"I wonder what Roland will think of the Tribune's attack on his factory," said Mr. Derwent, referring to a report of conditions in the Gregory factory which had been published in Reginald's newspaper of the previous day.

"I believe there is a lot of truth in what those girls claim," said Mrs. Derwent, vigorously. "It seems that employers care nothing for decency any more. All they want is to have cheap labor and the certainty of big dividends."

Not only at the Derwent home, but all over Bronson and vicinity the startling report of conditions in the Gregory factory was the topic of conversation that day.

Remembering the insults of Roland Gregory, feeling angry at him on account of his approaching wedding to Joy Graham, assured that some of the charges which the striking employees of his factory had made a year before were true, Reginald Nelson quietly planned to write up the inside conditions and regulations of the Gregory factory as the first article in a series which he intended to publish in regard to Bronson's industrial plants. The investigations were made

by a woman writer, who disguised herself as a poor girl, and applied for work at the factory office. For a whole week she worked with the girls; she heard their conversation; found out in regard to the average weekly wage; noticed carefully all the details of the factory work, and investigated the charges which had been made by the leaders of the strike.

When Roland Gregory read the article as it was published in the Tribune he was furious. He went at once to Mr. Graham's office to see what the law could do in such a case, but Mr. Graham was sceptical about the value of legal measures.

"Unless you can prove that his statements are false and slanderous," said Mr. Graham, shaking his head, "it will only make bad matters worse for you to take the fellow into court."

"But it is an outrageous invasion of my personal rights. That woman spy had no right to enter my factory," exclaimed young Gregory.

"It seems private rights are being invaded on every hand," said the lawyer. "Our country will sink into anarchy unless some stringent repressive legislation is enacted curbing the power of the press, but until that time you have no legal redress from these insults of the Tribune."

"I will see that fellow again myself," declared Roland Gregory. "If the law does not help me I may be able to help myself."

"It will do no good," replied the other, despondently.

Roland Gregory had been drinking somewhat that day, and he left the office of Mr. Graham in no pleasant mood. After visiting his club, where he fortified himself with a few more glasses, he wended his way to the Tribune office. Reginald saw him enter the door and knew at once what was the cause of his visit.

"Good-morning, Mr. Gregory," said the editor, pleasantly. "This is an unexpected pleasure to have you call on us. I hope you like Bronson's new paper."

"To h—— with your paper," replied the other, fiercely, standing in the middle of the office and glaring at Reginald.

"Sit down, Mr. Gregory," responded the editor, speaking in a pleasant tone of voice, although his eyes sparkled. "What can I do for you today?"

"What do you mean by sending a spy to my factory to sneak around and find out about my private affairs?" Roland Gregory spoke in evident anger.

"The business of your factory," replied the editor, looking the other straight in the face, "is not a private affair of your own. An institution which employs so many mothers and daughters is an institution of public interest and the public have a right to know the facts which have been published in regard to your factory."

"The public has nothing to do with my factory. D—— the public. I want to tell you that this thing has got to stop."

The excited spirit of the young manufacturer was arousing him to fury and his anger was increasing the

effect of the intoxicating liquor which he had been drinking. He lifted his hand and walked threateningly towards the editor.

"If I have overstepped my rights as an editor the law courts are open," declared Reginald, firmly.

"I'll soon have you in court," shouted the other, attempting to strike the editor in the face. Reginald saw that his visitor was partially intoxicated and that he had lost all self-control. He warded off the blow which Roland Gregory aimed at him, slipped out of his seat, and seized his opponent by the coat collar.

Shaking him roughly the editor marched the helpless manufacturer before him out of his private office, through the main entrance, and gave him a push into the street. "Begone," said Reginald Nelson between his teeth, as he closed and locked the door.

Muttering vengeance, the ousted manufacturer walked unsteadily down the street. Reginald Nelson returned to his desk and sat in silent thought for a few moments. "To think," he said to himself, "that Joy Graham is to be chained to that fellow for life. It is an outrage. I must see her and plead with her to bethink herself before she yields to such a fate."

"Alas, why should I see her?" he continued despondingly. "She surely knows his character and his habits, yet I will certainly urge Mrs. Rutledge to use her best efforts to save the unfortunate girl."

Still deep in thought, Reginald was pondering whether he should say anything in his paper of Gregory's visit to his office. He wished for Joy's sake to make no mention of the incident unless Gregory pro-

voked him further, but he felt that Gregory's words and actions were such that the public ought to know them. His theories about publicity were radical and he had a conscientious abhorrence of covering up anything which was rightfully a matter for public knowledge.

As he sat pondering over the question some one knocked loudly at the closed door. Allan Rutledge was standing outside, impatiently seeking admittance.

Reginald hurried to the door and opened it. "Come in, Dr. Rutledge," he exclaimed; "what's wrong now?"

"Let us go into your office," said the minister in an excited voice.

The editor led the way into his private office and closed the door. The minister sat down and breathed hard. There was a silence for a few moments and then Allan Rutledge took out of his pocket a letter.

"I have had some startling news this morning," he began, looking earnestly at the editor and speaking in a low tone of voice.

"What is it?" asked Reginald, anxiously.

"Let me explain to you, first of all, what this letter refers to before you read it."

The minister then told the story of Mrs. Rutledge's interview with the mother of the hapless Mae Mobray, and the facts about the ring.

"You remember that night that you called on me to ask my co-operation in making a midnight tour of Bronson? That was the night that Mrs. Rutledge gave me the ring. The exciting incidents of that night and the ferment that followed our investigations drove the

matter out of my mind until the other day. I sent the ring to Chicago. It has been identified and the purchaser has been discovered by a reference to the books of the jewelry firm."

"Who bought the ring?" asked the editor, eagerly.

For answer the minister handed the letter which he had been holding in his hand to Reginald Nelson, and the editor read it with staring eyes.

"I had a suspicion flash over my mind more than once that this was the real state of the case. My God, isn't it awful? Not for his sake, but for her sake."

"What ought we to do? We must do something and do it immediately." Allan Rutledge asked the question with tense emotion.

Before the editor could answer there was a knock at the door of the private office. Reginald arose and on opening the door a telegram was handed to him. "Why didn't you 'phone it?" asked Reginald, as he signed the messenger boy's receipt book for the message.

"The operator said it was not a message he cared to 'phone. It just came over the wires a few minutes ago."

The boy left and Reginald sat down and tore the envelope open. "Beachville," he read, and then he exclaimed, "It's a cablegram."

In silence he perused the message which had been flashed with the speed of light across the Atlantic ocean and overland from New York to Bronson.

The room was still and Allan Rutledge sat looking earnestly at his companion. The face of the young editor became pale as death when he had finished read-

ing the despatch. The muscles of his mouth twitched; tears came to his eyes, and he covered his face with his hands. The paper which had brought its desolating news to the young editor slipped from his grasp and fluttered on the floor.

Wondering what the message might be the minister picked it up hastily and read: "Beachville, England, October 13. Father died suddenly this morning. Come home at once."

No signature was signed, but Allan Rutledge at once understood. He arose and put his arms around the weeping man. "I sympathize with you, my brother," he said, tenderly.

The whole frame of the other shook with his intense emotion and he made no response. "Tell me about your father," said the minister, after a few moments, unable to understand the reason for the deep agony of suffering which the death message had caused.

CHAPTER XXIII.

REGINALD'S RETURN

A little later Mr. Cameron told Reginald the story of the happenings in Bronson during the eventful weeks that he was in England.

"Mr. Marchmount came back from his trip to Europe just a day or two after you left," said Mr. Cameron, "and when he found out the way things had been going since you left he took your place in the Tribune office, and he carried on a fight, I can tell you. He accused Mr. Graham of all kinds of roguery, and at the election last week Mr. Prince was elected with a majority of almost two to one. Bronson is a new city."

"How about the saloons?" asked Reginald, quickly.

"They're gone, too," exclaimed Mr. Cameron. "It was a clean sweep. Man, I tell you since Dr. Rutledge came to Bronson there has been a big change in things."

"Has the wedding come off?" asked Reginald, a little later.

"What wedding?"

"The wedding of Joy Graham and Roland Gregory."

"No," replied Mr. Cameron, in a perplexed tone.

"We don't know what to think of that. It was postponed for a month, and I hear Joy Graham is sick. She has not been out to church for several Sabbaths."

This news disquieted Reginald so much that he decided he would have to walk over to the home of Allan Rutledge in spite of the late hour and find out from the minister some more news in regard to Joy Graham.

"Come in, come in, my friend," exclaimed Allan Rutledge, as he ushered Reginald Nelson into his study. "I have been looking for you every day. Have you heard he news?"

"Some of it," responded Reginald. "I hear that Bronson's new day has begun to dawn."

"It surely has," said Allan Rutledge, heartily. "The saloons have been voted out to the amazement of the liquor people. Edgar Prince is to be our next mayor. George Caldwell, Dr. Gracely and Davis Parker are amongst the new councilmen. I understand that already there has been a flight of the evil birds of prey which have been feasting on the souls of young men and women in Bronson for a good while."

"How is Joy Graham?" asked Reginald, abruptly.

The minister's face clouded. "Did you get my telegram which I sent in care of the Neptune?"

"Yes."

"I spoke of further developments, you remember. Mrs. Rutledge found out that Joy desires to break the engagement, but her father is determined that she shall marry Gregory."

"We shall soon free the girl," responded Reginald, with flashing eyes.

"I have done absolutely nothing further about the letter," said Allan Rutledge, "as I desired to await your return. How had we best proceed?"

"I will meet the fellow myself tomorrow and get a confession out of him," said Reginald, slowly. "I am eager first of all to free Joy Graham. From what I hear the anxiety of her mind is breaking her down. I fear it may be another such case as that of Anne Rutledge unless there is immediate relief."

Allan Rutledge turned over the letter which he had received from the jewelry firm in Chicago to Reginald, giving him the ring also. In their letter the jewellers stated that Roland Gregory had purchased the ring. "It is a clear case," said Allan Rutledge. "I have no doubt that Gregory was the real cause of Mae Morbray's death. I sometimes wonder at God's patience when I see such deviltry amongst men."

"The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small," replied Reginald, earnestly.

The next morning Reginald Nelson appeared at the Tribune office, and resumed his work as editor. Shortly before the noon hour he telephoned to Roland Gregory that he would like to see him alone in his office at noon, and the young manufacturer, greatly surprised, promised to await the coming of the editor.

Reginald Nelson and Roland Gregory faced each other in the latter's office at the noon hour on the day following Reginald's return from England. The two young men were both representatives of the powerful

classes; one, the democratized son of ancient nobility; the other, the aristocratic scion of plebeian democracy grown wealthy in a generation. Strength, firmness, self-control marked the features of the champion of democracy; weakness, self-love and arrogance were pictured on the other's countenance.

"What do you want, sir?" asked Roland Gregory, with a frown, when Reginald had entered the office and stood facing him.

"I want to see you privately for a few moments," replied Reginald, fixing his eyes on the manufacturer.

"We are alone," said the other. "The office is empty. What do you want?"

"Have you ever seen that ring before?" Reginald handed the ring, which Allan Rutledge had given him, to Joy Graham's fiancé as he spoke.

Roland Gregory started as he saw the ring and hesitated before taking it from the other's hand.

"Take it and look it over. Did you ever see it before?" continued Reginald.

Roland Gregory took the ring and examined it hastily. He handed it back, saying scornfully, "No, I know nothing about that ring."

"Did you not buy that ring in Chicago about a year ago?" asked the other.

"Get out of here," responded Gregory, losing his patience. "I know nothing about that ring, I tell you. Get out."

"I will get out of here when I am through with this interview," said Reginald, firmly. "Do not get too hasty, Mr. Gregory."

"I have a letter here," continued the editor of the Tribune, taking a letter from his pocket, "which was written by the jewelry firm in Chicago which sold this ring, and they say that you were the purchaser."

"Well, what of that? What are you driving at?" asked Gregory, growing pale.

"This ring was taken from the dead hand of Mae Mobray after her death by poison," declared Reginald Nelson, sternly. "Do you deny that you gave this ring to the girl?"

Roland Gregory was speechless. His eyes turned, terror-stricken, on his unwelcome visitor, and his right hand trembled as it lay on his desk.

"What are you going to do?" he asked in a conscience-troubled tone which Reginald noticed at once.

"I am here today in the interests of Joy Graham," began Reginald.

"Joy Graham! What have you to do with my pledged wife?" asked Roland Gregory, vehemently.

"I want you to release Miss Graham from her pledge to marry you," responded Reginald.

Roland Gregory glared at the other with glowing eyes of hatred. "I know what you want," he hissed. "You want to marry Joy Graham yourself. I have seen through your scheme ever since you came to Bronson. Begone, sir, from this office, or I will throw you out."

Roland Gregory arose and tried to push the editor out of the door. The virile youth resented the uncere-
monious close of his interview with the manufacturer and the two men were soon struggling back and forth

in the office. Getting a firm grip of his adversary, Reginald pushed him back into his chair in no gentle fashion, exclaiming, "Sit down, sir, and hear me out or I shall telephone at once for the officers."

Breathing hard from his exertions, with clenched teeth and shining eyes, the defeated manufacturer faced the editor again.

"Do not get excited, Mr. Gregory," said Reginald, calmly. "I have good reasons for coming here and making my demand that you free Joy Graham from her pledge to you. You know, sir, you are not worthy to wed her or any other girl. Your hands are red with blood."

Gregory's breathing became labored as he listened to these words, but he made no response.

Reginald Nelson took a typewritten paper out of his pocket and placed it on the desk before the other. Gregory read the paper quickly. It was a written renunciation of his claim on Joy Graham.

"I want you to sign that, and sign it at once," said Reginald, determinedly.

"If I sign this paper," replied the other, speaking with difficulty, "what else will be required?"

"No one but Allan Rutledge and myself know the damning truth which is revealed by this ring and this letter. If you sign this renunciation of all claim on Joy Graham and leave Bronson forever that will be the end of it as far as we are concerned.

Roland Gregory bent his head on his hand. In a few moments he reached into his hip pocket, and

before Reginald understood his purpose he had drawn a revolver and pointed it squarely at the editor.

"If I can't have Joy Graham, neither can you," he hissed with an oath.

Reginald leaped upon the desperate man. As he did so Roland Gregory fired.

The editor reeled and fell unconscious at his feet. Looking wildly at the fallen man, Gregory turned the gun upon himself.

A noise was heard outside and in a moment Allan Rutledge rushed into the office. The minister had come to the Tribune office to invite the editor to lunch with him, and was told that he had left for the office of Roland Gregory. Fearing the result of the interview, Allan Rutledge had hurried after Reginald, and arrived outside the office in time to hear the two pistol shots. He suspected the worse and rushed in, just in time to see the young manufacturer stagger and fall prostrate over the body of the stricken editor.

Hastily examining the two bodies, and saying to himself in horror, "Dead, both dead," he hastened to the telephone and called up Dr. Gracely and the police. In a few moments the police patrol dashed up to the factory and the tragedy was disclosed. Allan Rutledge hastily told the chief in regard to the letter, which he found lying on the floor, which pointed so plainly to Roland Gregory as the guilty man in the Mae Mobray tragedy.

"I was not here in time to know what passed between the two men," declared Allan Rutledge, "but it

is evident that the crazed wretch first shot Mr. Nelson and then ended his own life."

While they were talking Dr. Gracely arrived, and at once examined them.

"They are both still alive," he declared, after a cursory examination, and then he added, "Mr. Gregory is fatally wounded. I think Mr. Nelson is only stunned."

"Thank God, thank God," exclaimed Allan Rutledge, with tears running down his cheeks.

Turning their attention to the wounded editor, the doctor washed the wound on his head, and soon looked up, saying quickly, "It is all right, Dr. Rutledge. It is only a scalp wound. The bullet glanced off the bone and in a few moments he will rally."

When the doctor turned again to the manufacturer, he said, sadly, "Poor Gregory, he has finished himself. His earthly course is run." The bullet had crashed through his brain.

The police took charge of the body of the dead manufacturer, while the doctor and Allan Rutledge worked over the unconscious Reginald.

In a little while he opened his eyes and stared around him. He saw the dark stream of blood on the floor, and then looked questioningly at his two friends who were bending over him.

"Where is he?" he asked in a hollow voice.

"He killed himself," responded Allan Rutledge, quietly. "It was a miracle your life was saved."

"Am I seriously hurt?" he asked.

"Only a scratch," answered the doctor. "It was a narrow escape."

In half an hour Dr. Gracely was able to assist Reginald into his motor car and, accompanied by Allan Rutledge, they hurried to the Cameron home. The sudden appearance of the doctor's motor car and the pale face of Reginald as he was assisted into the house gave Mrs. Cameron a bad fright, but she was soon assured that the editor's wound was a slight one. When Allan Rutledge had told her briefly the cause of the hurt, and the tragedy in the Gregory office the woman threw up her hands in horror, saying, "I always did think that Roland Gregory would come to a bad end. Poor Joy. Now she will be free."

Allan Rutledge, after he saw that Reginald was resting quietly in bed, and that the effects of his wound would be trivial, hurried off to his home. After relating the dark deed of Roland Gregory to his wife he sent her to the Graham home to break the news to Joy.

"Poor girl," said Mrs. Rutledge, sadly. "It will be a shock, but I do not think she will grieve over the wretched fellow. It was a mercy that the wedding was postponed, wasn't it?"

When Joy Graham heard of the encounter in the factory office and of the wounding of Reginald and death of Ronald, she was prostrated. Both Mr. and Mrs. Graham sat by the bedside and sought to soothe her, but it was not until Allan Rutledge had arrived, and told her, in part, the reason of the awful affair that she was at all quieted.

"It is too terrible," said Joy. "I cannot bear to think of Roland doing such a thing, but I am glad he did not do it on my account."

At first the girl had believed that she was the innocent cause of the quarrel between the two men and the resultant shooting, but Allan gently told her that a dark charge had been brought to the door of Roland Gregory and that the rash youth had apparently lost his reason when he discovered his guilt was known.

As the full import of the tragedy dawned on the mind of Mr. Graham he lost his proud self-righteous air. The repeated shocks which he had been receiving one after another began to tell upon him; his removal from the board of trustees of the Central Church; his defeat for the office of mayor; the failure of his newspaper enterprise; and the crowning blow of the discovery of the character of Roland Gregory and his tragic death. He became despondent and his wife asked Dr. Rutledge to call and see him. Very gently the minister pointed out to the disappointed man the meaning of the sore providences which had turned the joy of his life into bitterness.

"Adversity is a time to consider," said Allan Rutledge. "You have had much mercy mixed with your judgments. No blow has fallen on your family as might have been the case."

As a result of the minister's talk the repentant lawyer expressed a desire for further conferences, and in a short time Allan Rutledge had the pleasure of receiving Mr. Graham into the Central Church on profession of his faith in Christ.

The day after his union with the church Mr. Graham called at the office of the Tribune. Reginald Nelson was at his desk and he greeted the lawyer with pleas-

ure. It was the first time that Mr. Graham had entered the establishment of the rival newspaper.

After a few moments of silence Mr. Graham began slowly, "I want to apologize to you, Mr. Nelson, for my conduct towards you. I have no excuse to offer. I have treated you shamefully."

"Not at all, not at all," replied the other, cheerfully. "You know you gave me my first start in Bronson when you recommended me to the place in the railroad office."

"I have not done right," persisted the lawyer. "I want you to forgive me."

"I forgive you certainly," responded Reginald. "Let us shake hands."

The two men shook hands earnestly.

"I received from the law firm in London a long account of your family history, Mr. Nelson," continued Mr. Graham, "and I am proud to know that you are worthy of the highest plaudits which your Bronson friends have been giving you."

"Thank you," answered Reginald, simply.

"My daughter, Joy, has been sick, very sick, ever since she heard of that tragedy at the Gregory office, but she is getting better. She asked me to bring you home for dinner to-night. She wants to see you."

"I shall certainly accept your kind invitation. It is good news to know of Miss Graham's recovery."

That evening after the dinner party, which included not only Reginald, but also Allan Rutledge and his wife, Reginald and Joy were left alone by the connivance of Mrs. Rutledge.

It was the first time they had met since his return from England. The girl still looked pale, but there was a bright, hopeful look in her eye which betokened returning health.

"Mr. Nelson," she said, softly, "papa has been telling me something about your family in England. I am sorry to know of your father's sudden death. You won't leave Bronson, will you?"

"Not unless you go with me," said Reginald, looking into her eyes. She met his gaze and in her eyes he read his happiness.

"Joy," he exclaimed, "you are free now. Can I express my love for you which began long ago when we first met on the Neptune?"

"Reginald," she whispered, and in a fond embrace every barrier between them had gone. "I loved you all the time, too, but I did not dare admit it, even to myself."

They talked over their future plans. Reginald told of his own beautiful home which he was already planning to build in the outskirts of Bronson, and spoke of his ancestral castle in England which he expected to visit every summer.

"This is like a beautiful dream," said the girl, in a happy tone. "I seem to have waked up out of a horrible nightmare."

"It is a dream that will last for life," said Reginald, smilingly. When Vivian Derwent heard of the sudden turn of affairs she pouted a good deal, but finally concluded to receive George Caldwell back again. The double wedding was planned for the following spring,

and the honeymoon of Reginald and Joy was spent at Earlham Castle in Essex, England. Edgar Prince and his new council redeemed their pledges to the people of Bronson and to-day the city is a model of civic efficiency. The very name of Bud McCrea, once all-powerful, is being forgotten.

"The vision of Joy in regard to Bronson has come true," Allan Rutledge often says to his wife, and then he adds, "The husband of Joy helped to make it so."

The Courier and the Tribune have combined into a new paper which is called the Courier-Tribune. As its honored editor, Reginald Nelson, wields a power for good which is felt far and wide, and political honors await him before he will go much farther along life's journey.

"I lost my life," he said once to Joy, "but I found it again in you and in realizing your vision of what Bronson should be."

THE END.

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The vision of joy

